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DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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ONE SHILLING

A WAR TO BE AVERTED

Most films are produced to make dollars and pounds, but selling films is selling ideas, not groceries. When the film salesman has his profit safely in his pocket, the ideas begin to work on men's minds. From the conflict between profit and ideas spring most of the current controversies on the future of the film industry; controversies that have now become a matter of public concern.

There appears to be considerable danger that a situation of hostility might arise from the present uncertainties regarding the future of the British Film Industry in relation to the powerful combines which, from Hollywood and New York, are in a position to launch an attempt at world monopoly. It would be a thousand pities if such a conflict should arise, for it is something which ought to be avoidable in terms of international good sense.

But the situation is beginning to look serious. People are getting perturbed. It is being said that there is no reason why the British people should be brought up on American culture, simply because American finance dominates our film industry. It would be so fatally easy, say the pessimists, for the Government to consider the British film industry on a comparable level of importance with the manufacture of, say, luxury leather goods—a source of revenue from foreign markets to be used as a bargaining counter when allocation of post-war markets is on the Anglo-American agenda. The Government might think it smart business to sacrifice our claim for film markets in exchange for a wide distribution of Australian wool or British blankets.

To appreciate fully the dangers of such a policy we might well consider the history of the Catholic Church. Catholicism, like Hollywood, has always been looking for new markets for old ideas. And wherever Catholicism found a market it left behind, not only its product, but an obstinate deposit of residual ideas. Today a growing number of people are beginning to feel that Hollywood has done, is doing, and will do the same, and that not always consciously and deliberately, but always effectively, the American motion picture has spread and is spreading throughout the world an ideology which, whatever its suitability for American domestic consumption, is inappropriate to all peoples. It is being pointed out that the American film may have raised standards of cleanliness throughout the world, that it may have encouraged us to wash and clean our teeth, to revere the physical beauty of our women and to keep our grape-fruit in refrigerators; that it may have publicised a moral code at once salutary and sentimental, but that its encouragement of materialist and individualist philosophies is out-of-date in relation to developing European cultures.

To the foregoing we must hasten to add that we have not yet succeeded in making the British film industry a medium of expression for the British people and the British view, though it is nearer to it than at any time before.

The problem is complex. Solutions which have been proposed are contradictory and cut across normal political alignments. There is a need for objectivity and freedom from old prejudice. The Board of Trade must watch with jealous eyes the buying into our industry, both at the production and showing ends, by American interests. Two Acts of Parliament have already been needed to loosen the American hold on British film production. It is difficult for the British film industry not to think of this conflict in national terms. Yet is it not rather a financial fight between groups, the stronger of which is at present American? Following this line of thought, what is our answer to those supporters of Rank who argue that the building up of a strong centralised British film industry is more likely to achieve success against the American colossus than a number of small, independent British groups which in this industry inevitably speak with dissentient voices?

Should not our independent producers of second-rate comedy, hoping to hoist their dividends with their Union Jacks, examine their heads as well as their hearts; and reflect that patriotic righteousness still provides no justification for bad musicals?.

Rank's supporters in their turn must consider whether centralised financial control by a single individual with strong sociological persuasions does not ultimately and inevitably mean centralised dictatorship of subjects and ideas.

Meantime the problem remains; and the highly divergent views of the industry and the high levels on which the financial conflict is moving, make it essentially a problem that cannot be solved without official Government help.

If the British people are, as we believe, entitled to a just proportion of the world's screen time, it is all the more necessary that the Government, no less than the trade, should negotiate on a level which takes into full account the value of the film as a medium of international understanding. It is not merely a matter of international trade, nor merely a matter of our own national culture. It is a matter of seeing to it that all nations which engage in film-making (and what nation should not?) are in a position to make their own contribution to world screens.

As it is, it looks as though we have made up our minds to engage on purely bilateral negotiations and manœuvres. Yet it is pretty clear in most other fields that the structure of a world society must from now on depend on multilateral conceptions. In our efforts to safeguard our own national culture in terms of film we should not forget the many other nations with equal claims. We might consider speaking for others as well as for ourselves, and so bring to our dealings with the United States film industry a conception which will overstep national boundaries and make a real contribution to the world planning which must follow this war.

LETTERS FROM RUSSIA

By permission of Ivor Montagu to whom the letters were sent.

From Pudovkin

DEAR IVOR,

I was glad to receive news of you although, to my regret, this was merely in the form of a telegram. I don't know whether you've had the letter I sent you last winter. You already know that I've finished the film of *The Russians*. I hope you'll see it on the screen soon. You won't be surprised that the play has been changed a good deal. You're an old film man and don't need reminding that the scale peculiar to the film dictates compression of the story, in every scene as well as of the play as a whole, to a much more thorough degree than needs to be done in the theatre.

Simonov and I together took out a whole number of characters, distributing their plot functions among the not very many that remained. We did this, for example, with the Germans, working out a new sort of synthetic character for the General, whose part—I may say by the way—interested me particularly. Well, for the first time since Tolstoy's *The Living Corpse* I've had a go at trying out my acting talents. The unfortunate "corpse" and the responsibility for his posturings could, after all, be shifted on to Otsep, who directed it. For any possible ill-success of the General, I and I alone am answerable. Even Simonov can't be made blameworthy. In putting the General on the screen, I was partly anxious to pay the Germans a personal score on my own account.

During the first world war, I spent some time with them as a prisoner. I very well remember an elderly General who used to come to our war prisoners' camp in the capacity of an Inspector with the special job of making harsher the harsh conditions under which we uncomfortably lived. I very well remember how he used to pass down the ranks of ragamuffins among whom I stood and bawl out to his officers, accusing them of "soft-heartedness" and "liberalism".

A tall, oldish fellow, with broad, stooping shoulders, on which hung loosely his grey military greatcoat embellished with turned-back red lapels. From time to time he would turn his deadpan face toward us and direct upon one or other of us a gaze completely devoid of expression. Then that gaze would crawl over the man he was looking at, with the slow deliberation of a dreadnought manœuvring.

I've remembered that fellow all my life long. I've remembered with a kind of horror that there can be human beings in existence with the mental make-up and horizon almost of some sort of mangy chained watchdog, whose visual world is bounded by a view of feet, either those of his master—which he must lick—or those of other people against which he must hurl himself, snarling and slavering. I was pretty much of a youngster, endowed with a natural respect for grey hairs, and the impression it made on me was truly abominable. And if I've succeeded, playing in my picture, in giving even an approximate rendering of this vile spiritual emptiness of a German "patriot", then I shall be most happy, and feel I've paid back a bit of my debt to the noble "Aryans".

The main thing we've tried to do in the film is exactly to portray its title: *The Russians*. They are a very varied people, the Russians in this story, with sharply distinguished ages and characters, with different sorts of education and differing experience of life. The twenty-year-old fresh and spontaneous Valya; the sixty-year-old sagacious, experienced and rigidly firm-of-principle Vasin; the forty-year-old Safonov whose will-power, hardened in battle, directs his every word and action; the life-loving Globa, fussing about comfort whatever happens; the hysterically weak-willed wife of Dr. Kharitonenko—all these at the given moment march on the one path, not one determined in accordance with their individual characters, but the one belonging to the people as a whole. To that same "soul of a nation" of which Tolstoy tells with such power in "War and Peace" and in whose final victory we all of us today invincibly believe.

My next job is tied up with exactly that all-deciding strength of the "soul of a nation". Simonov and I are working on a film of the great battle near Moscow. It's not, of course, going to be an affair of battle scenes and panoramas. Nor of duplicating what has already been done in newsreels and newspaper stories. No, the job is to perceive and portray those deep "root" causes that brought about the inevitable first defeat of the Germans, despite their then clear superiority not only in material but also in military morale, exalted by their uninterrupted victories.

I can't tell you any more about that film—it's now in the stage of being worked out. Simultaneously with this pretty large-scale job, I am, as I do always, working on the parallel preparation of another. I'm planning to make a picture about "Admiral Nakhimov". He was a naval hero of ours dating from the days of sail. I should like to ask your help and I'll tell you in what direction. The traditional uniforms of the English fleet in sail-boat days were pretty well international at the time. They were imitated in all countries, our own among them. If you could get hold of a reasonable quantity of pictorial material dealing with naval sailing fleets of about 1840–1860 for me, I should be most heartily grateful. Any daguerreotypes of the period you could get hold of would be especially valuable, because photography was so poorly developed in our part of the world in those days.

I can't let this opportunity go of telling you what I thought of the picture *In Which We Serve*. It's a splendid job, overwhelming in its complete and well-thought out frankness. One of my comrades called it profoundly national, and I fully agree with him. The picture is English through and through. You can see the face of the real England in it. The scene in which the Captain, taking leave, shakes the hands of a whole file of his compatriots, and each conducts himself as though he were like no one but himself, and yet at the same time all are like each other, will remain long in my memory.

Please give my warmest and most cordial greetings to the author and to all who worked on the film with him.

Yours,

V. I. Pudovkin

From Rowan Karmen

DEAR MONTAGU,

Returning from the front I found your cable which I answer immediately.

I have always been a strong opponent of uniting documentary and acted material. And long before I saw the Davies film I was interested in how far Curtiz had succeeded in integrally blending the newsreel and studio shot, in the means used to enable the actors to recreate political figures and to reconstitute political events.

I think Curtiz has succeeded in this. And the success he has achieved is not merely in making a good production in comparison to the ordinary run of film, but in establishing an interesting new genre of feature films, that one might call journalistics. I am sure that many new films, well appreciated by audiences, will come to be made in this genre.

The new material embodied in the film and forming an inseparable part of it creates, in my opinion, a stronger impression than acted versions of the same scenes would have done.

It is possible, by the way, that our appreciation of the film is a bit handicapped by the make-up of the actors who personify the political figures of our country. Soviet spectators can hardly restrain a smile when on the screen appear Kalinin, Vyshinsky, Litvinov, Molotov—all utterly unlike themselves as they are in real life. But it is obvious that the director did not set out to create exact resemblances, just as he is content to show Walter Huston, who appears on the screen immediately following the authentic Davis, also not at all like the original. Huston is a talented actor. From the first moment he appears he stands out as the film's main character, its author and commentator on major events which, though recent, have already entered the realm of history.

We see how the war of to-day which is costing mankind so much blood and suffering was unleashed. We see Berlin—that robber's den in the centre of Europe, wherein steel wings were forged upon the dove of peace. Before the spectator's eyes pass the frenzied bacchanalia of Hitler's military parades. Everything in that country—from the crazed Führer to those children he corrupted to become tin soldiers—everything is directed toward the aim of conquering the world. And in what striking contrast to those scenes in the film showing the gloom and pitiful stupidity reigning in Nazi Germany appear the scenes on the screen depicting the peaceful building up of the Soviet Union.

Thousands of people have seen this film in our country. Soviet filmgoers have unquestionably appreciated the noble aspiration of its author, which permeates it with an appeal for mutual understanding and mutual trust between the democratic States in the interests of speediest victory over the enemy and the building up of lasting peace after victory has been achieved.

For us film people the picture *Mission to Moscow* is of great interest as typing a new genre *Film Journalistics*. We welcome it as a work strengthening the friendly relations between great peoples, cementing the firm alliance of the democracies without which final victory over Hitlerism, the enemy of progressive mankind, is impossible of achievement.

Yours sincerely,

ROWAN KARMEN

Transmitted by S.C.R. (Kislova)

Educational Film

by G. Patrick Meredith

Visual Education Centre, University College, Exeter

THE future is being anxiously scanned by all who are concerned with educational films whether as producers, administrators or users. There are two major problems: who is to finance production? And who is to control it? It is not always true that he who pays the piper calls the tune. If it were true in educational film production the choice and quality of films would either be commercially dictated or state-dictated. The former is undesirable. The latter, whether you like it or not, is contrary to English educational policy, which has always avoided any centralisation of education which would give the government of the day direct control over the classroom. Europe to-day is an object-lesson of the opposite policy.

It is fairly obvious that we shall have mixed finance in educational film production. Extensive plans are now being laid down by a number of great industrial and commercial concerns for the production of sponsored films specifically educational in character. These will be freely distributed after the War. Then there are the various film production companies, large and small, who have to make a profit on their productions. Ultimately these films will be paid for out of public funds. There is also the possibility that a successor to the M.O.I. Films Division may take a hand, again financed out of public funds.

The teacher's share

We can look upon this situation as a grand opportunity for a terrific scrap or we can look upon it as a problem to be solved. The one guiding idea to take us through the maze is the realisation that ultimately all these films have to be shown to children, by teachers in classrooms, in order to satisfy educational needs. This is sometimes overlooked. The teacher, then, should have a direct say in production policy. *If we can devise machinery for making educational needs articulate, and for giving the educational world the final say in production, we can avoid the perils of both commercial and political dictation.* (And socialists who *want* political dictation must admit that they want it only when they are in power.)

Now how can the teacher be enabled to play his part? Perhaps his biggest contribution to the educational film problem is his expert sense of relative difficulty on the one hand, and his sense of the relative importance of topics in the existing curriculum on the other. On both of these points film producers often go sadly astray, and this single fact is more than anything else responsible for the considerable measure of scepticism which still exists in the teaching profession. It is not the producers' fault. They cannot be experts in both the studio and the class-room. The fault lies in the lack of the machinery of collaboration. The producer *is* at fault if he imagines that there is any resemblance between the educational film situation and the feature film situation. You get your regular twenty million habitués going to see feature films with very little effective discrimination—there is no rival entertainment on a comparable scale. But if teachers are dissatisfied with the educational films provided, they just won't play ball. Panels for previewing films already produced, while very necessary, are no solution. The teacher must have an effective voice in production right from the start if the final product is to be as perfect educationally as it is photographically. All this has been said before, especially in Scotland, but we still lack the machinery to make the principle operative.

The director's job

We must beware of over-simplification. This problem is inherently complex. Give a topic to your film director and he at once starts "seeing" it pictorially. Being thoroughly familiar with the whole range of techniques at his disposal he easily selects those which best suit his purpose. Few teachers have that familiarity. They know what they want in terms of hard factual and intellectual content, but the intrinsic peculiarities of the film medium prevent them from fully realising either the difficulties or the opportunities. Yet it is *not* enough for the teachers to offer merely a list of topics on which they require films.

We have to respect the creative prerogative of the film director. He is first and foremost an artist. At the same time he has to recognise that he cannot have quite the free hand in educational films that he has in documentaries. In making an educational film he becomes a worker in the "education industry". This means that the synthesis achieved in the film must do more than satisfy his own aesthetic proclivities and the intellectual needs of the situation—his ordinary documentaries have to do that anyway. *The educational film must be capable of being used by the teachers without playing havoc with their normal handling of the topics.*

It is useful to distinguish four types of educational films. I shall call them the Essay-type, the Chapter-type, the Paragraph-type and the Sentence-type. The Essay-type is your background film. Here the director can and should have wide latitude. He has opportunities to rove over a much wider range of possibilities than the teacher and can introduce material which just would not occur to the latter. The classroom view is apt to become restricted. The background film can open a window on the world. It may even tell the teacher something about the wider relevance of the subjects he is teaching. The length, both of this type and of the Chapter-type should be determined not by the length of an Edwardian music-hall turn but by the needs of the theme and the children's capacity for attention.

The Chapter-type is your straight teaching film and is the hard core of our problem. The Paragraph-type is a silent segment lasting perhaps two or three minutes or even less and dealing with a single unit process, movement, growth, change, etc. The Sentence-type is similar to the Paragraph but the unit is smaller. It is exemplified in the Loop-film. These last two types are needed in large number to supply the dynamic material required in so many lessons. They offer no serious problem other than in the technique of handling them, which still needs exploration. As far as production is concerned, lists of topics on which these short films are required should be furnished by the teachers and the films should be bought outright by the schools.

The real problem is the Chapter-type. If this type is to survive, some quite new machinery will have to be devised to bring about the necessary integration of the educational and cinematic aspects. It is quite useless for producers to force pre-fabricated bundles of knowledge on the teachers. As a profession they won't take it. And they have a case. I do not claim that the teachers' case, as sometimes expounded, is altogether water-tight. They tend to adopt a proprietorial attitude to the curriculum. Their curriculum tends to get out-of-date through inertia. They sometimes forget that society on the one hand, and science, scholarship and art on the other have rights in the curriculum. A static curriculum is no preparation for a dynamic world. The tendency to regard the teacher as the one expert who knows what's what, while understandable, cannot go unchallenged. But if the challenge comes from commercial interests it is obviously unacceptable. Some means must be found (and we are busy at Exeter finding it) for encouraging progressive-minded teachers up and down the country to get to intellectual grips with the film as an educational medium.

The film is a self-contained medium in its own right, owing little directly to any other media —indeed suffering from the jealousy of these— and having its origin in the technical progress of photography. As a self-contained medium it has its own laws, its own inner structure, its own stylistic devices, its own "vocabulary" and "grammar" and,—be it noted—its own *logic*. So accustomed are we to taking our traditional verbal logic as the only possible logic (though the logicians themselves in recent times have produced an amazing crop of divergent logics even of the verbal variety) that the notion of visual logic as a thought-system, with characteristics having little or nothing in common with our verbal logics, comes as a shock. This is a

(*Continued overleaf*)

separate topic, to be developed elsewhere. For the moment suffice it to say that traditional logic, as formalised originally by Aristotle, simply codified certain thought processes deemed adequate for minds living in a very different social and physical world from the one we inhabit, but desperately inadequate to-day. To transform our thought processes and bring them into close correspondence with the actual processes around us, a medium is needed which can speak directly to millions—as do the press and radio. The only such medium is the film.

The film is a medium of communication, but not merely in the mechanical sense. Radio and the printing press are media of communication but they simply communicate *words*. The film can communicate not only words but images and visual ideas. These form a language in themselves. It follows that we are all becoming bilingual. However, so rooted are our ways of thought, our social behaviour, our civilisation, in verbal language, that we are not—most of us—mentally ready for what the film has to offer.

Hence the need for a deliberate attempt to bring verbal and visual expression into juxtaposition to bridge the gulf and pave the way for a visual-minded generation. Such a change-over would enable the linguistic strangle-hold of traditional stupidity, hatred and ignorance, to be eliminated. It is not so easy to be stupid in pictures. Further we can say things visually which can't be said at all verbally.

If the film can say things which verbal language cannot express, or can express only with endless circumlocution, this has an important bearing on the relation between film producer and teacher. We cannot simply suppose that educational film development would proceed smoothly, if only suitable machinery could be devised for bringing the wishes of the teacher to the notice of the film-producers. You have to conceive before you can wish and you conceive mostly in the terms on which your mental training was based. The vast majority of teachers have been trained in the verbal tradition. Their curricula, syllabuses and lessons are accordingly conceived in verbal terms, and they find it difficult to conceive education in any other terms. Consequently, if the production of educational films were made to depend on the wishes of the teachers the result would be doubly unfortunate. On the one hand, many of their wishes, being conceived in verbal terms would be incapable of filmic expression or would raise serious difficulties. On the other hand, a whole realm of visual ideas foreign to the outlook of all teachers trained in the verbal tradition but part of the film-maker's mental stock-in-trade, would go to waste because there would be no demand for it. You cannot demand something of whose existence you are unaware.

It is important to emphasise that in the film there has rapidly grown up, not only a new and immensely powerful *language*, but also a new world of *ideas*. The teacher may reply to this: "This is all very interesting but it does not concern me. I have a job to do, a certain amount of educational ground to cover and all I want is a few films to help me cover it. Your 'visual ideas' deal with things outside my curriculum". This brings us to the point at issue, the issue of the old wine and new bottles. *You cannot introduce a new and powerful educational technique and go on indefinitely teaching the same old curriculum.* The whole history of the Industrial Revolution teaches the same lesson. The railway and aeroplane do not merely do what the stage-coach once did. People travel for new purposes. The power-loom does not only make the old fabrics. The radio does not simply give the orator a wider public, it has given him a new world to talk about. Must education forever sit Canute-like, denying—or defying—the oncoming tide?

In short the film provides not only new ways of saying things but new things to say. If this argument is granted, a better, more reciprocal and more dynamical relation between film-producer and teacher becomes possible. Put schematically, it amounts to this:

Teacher: "I want you to make a film saying 'a b c' for me."

Producer: "I can't easily say 'a' but I can say 'b c' also 'd' which you hadn't thought of, but which is a logical extension of 'b c'. So if you will pave the way by saying 'a' in your own way, I will say 'b c d' in a film.

Teacher (later): "Your film was useful. It said 'b c' in about 8 minutes. Normally 'b c' takes over an hour of verbal instruction. Now 'd', which you stuck in, was a new one on me (though curiously enough it didn't seem new to some of the children) but I liked it. It gave me ideas. If 'd' helps in teaching 'b c', wouldn't something like it be possible in teaching 'e f' which is always a rather difficult topic?"

Producer: "Let me think a little. I once made a film on 'p q r' which is in some way similar to your 'e f' though not much like 'b c'. What you need here is not something like 'd' but something like 'i' to round off 'e f' in the way 'r' rounds off 'p q'. Yes, I think I can manage that."

Result: The film "e f g" which neither producer nor teacher would have thought of alone, and which could only result from their previous collaborative experience in film-production

This is, of course, a much over-simplified picture of the relationship between producer and teacher and we have left out a third party, the subject expert (scientist, historian, etc.), but enough has been said to indicate the process.

If the educational film is to develop systematically and in accordance with the needs of our present situation, the technique for pooling the brains and experience of the film-expert, the educational expert and the subject-expert must be elaborated and made more explicit. Moreover it is not merely a question of three individuals working together but three groups, or rather three professions. It is not merely a matter of expressing day-to-day needs or individual brain-waves *but of giving full-time technical expression to long-term educational policies and of bringing a vast realm of visual ideas into juxtaposition with the current educational ideology, and of being prepared for a substantial transformation.*

It is not enough merely to state a problem. Steps towards the solution must be indicated. The setting up of the Visual Education Centre at Exeter may contribute. It would be academic in the worst sense of the word to train teachers in the use of films without taking any interest in the probable future supply. As Lecturer in Visual Education I have been much occupied with this problem. Plans are now being put in hand for a series of conferences beginning with a conference next Easter at Exeter, mainly for teachers. Proposals will be made for permanent machinery for representing the various interests involved and for co-ordinating supply and demand. It should not be beyond the wit of man to devise means for harnessing our technological powers and opportunities to our social and educational needs.

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Two Good Fairies. *Production:* Norman Films. *Direction:* Germaine Burger. *Camera:* Jack Rose. *Script:* C. E. M. Joad. 17 mins.

THE Scottish C.W.S. is entitled to congratulatory remarks for sponsoring a film about the Beveridge plan, but they must forgive us if we fail to get enthusiastic about the results.

The story of the film concerns a soldier who dreams of what life will be like for him after the war with the Beveridge scheme in full operation. He is trained for a new job, gets married and rears a family, and at every stage of his life his friend "Bill" Beveridge pops up with a bountiful supply of money to help things along—marriage grants, maternity allowances, children's allowances, funeral grants and so on. Now this is all very well but it does no good service to Beveridge. To picture a post-war period in which a benevolent Government showers gifts on the people is precisely the approach any intelligent Tory would make for the purpose of discrediting Beveridge, and it is a matter of regret that the Scottish C.W.S. and Norman Films did not give far more thought to the propaganda approach to such an important subject. Neither is the film helped by its amateurish acting and bad casting or by an altogether too long and often unintelligible postscript in which the benefits of co-operative insurance are explained by someone sitting at a desk. (The Co-op is the second good fairy.)

The fight of the people to get the full measure of the Beveridge Plan embodied in legislation is likely to be a hard and bitter one; but there is no suggestion of this in the film. If the documentary film is to play its full and proper part in aiding and inspiring the people in their fight for social security, this "Manna from Heaven" approach evinced in the *Two Good Fairies* will have to be supplanted by some very clear objective thinking. The Co-operative Movement has in the past sponsored several really good documentary films and it is good that such an important and progressive movement should play a leading part in this field of propaganda for the post-war world. It is, therefore, with the friendliest of intentions that we suggest in future they devote more thought to the treatment of subjects.

Power for the Highlands. *Production:* Rotha Productions. *Direction:* Jack Chambers. *Photography:* W. Suschitsky. *Script:* Roger McDougall. M.O.I. 15 mins.

THE difficulty in scripting a post-war subject is that you are even more influenced towards vagueness and caution than when handling a current topic. This film shows that such screen statements can be both broadly definite and controversial. Does this prelude a period of less timidity, or is it just that the Scots are considered mentally more tough than the English?

A strong case is made for a post-war "T.V.A. Plan" by which the waters of the Highlands would be harnessed to provide Hydro-Electric Power for the development of industries, and thereby employment for the men now fighting. The argument is presented partly by commentary but most effectively by dialogue between a reactionary old estate keeper and Servicemen on leave, a prospecting engineer and two Yanks lost in a jeep. The keeper is too strong in screen personality for the others, which may be why his conversion to their way of thinking seems facile. Here is no character actor convincing you he's a good character actor, but a man who belongs to the hills and moors all around. Whether or not you credit his conversion doesn't matter: his dignity is not upset and he fixes the argument in your mind. The dialogue is good, though it seldom sounds spontaneous. The camera gets around from a shocking opening at Alamein to many interesting Highland scenes, and flies impressively over Tennessee. Neat continuity keeps the film coherent in spite of over-emphatic music. This lively picture will encourage all Scots who don't agree with the keeper. His kind will argue and maybe reconsider.

Highland Doctor. *Production:* Paul Rotha Productions. *Direction:* Kay Mander. *Photography:* E. Catford. M.O.I. Non-T. 21 mins.

MY father is at present Non-Theatrical. He can't get the petrol to drive into the nearest theatrical town. Though he always goes to the M.O.I. shows in the village, his praise is reserved: not solely on account of the defects of 16 mm. prints. He'd say about this film: it's all right if you like Highland scenery.

The director, remembering the trouble taken to establish two characters—a doctor and a specialist—might well protest. Father, thinking that perhaps he dozed a bit and not liking to admit so deadly a reflection on a visually lovely and well made film, might not maintain his point. But the truth is that screen characters which become disembodied voices tend to lose all character and become awkwardly conventional stooges. It may well be that lack of finance forced a treatment which entails mainly mute shooting. In that case, straightforward commentary would have allowed greater visual freedom and avoided that awkward flashback transition. The ghost voice treatment, though it probably dates back beyond the Preston Sturges narratage of ten years ago (*Power and Glory*) has never seemed good to me, except as a brief, pointed sequence transition.

The script of this film is lucid, the direction precise, lovely exterior photography conveying very well the geographical nature of the Highlands and islands where so much progress in medical services has been made during 30 years, but—to paraphrase—much remains to be done. All this is nice, despite the worried music, but it leaves you cold. The facts remain on the track. You take away only slight, pleasant impressions of distances and a plane on the shore.

Europe's Crossroads. March of Time. No. 6. 9th year.

MR. JEAN PAGES, who made that sensational *March of Time* about Franco Spain has since visited Portugal with cameraman Marcel Rebière, and while *Europe's Crossroads* has not the same quality of terrifying analysis as the Spanish film, it is still a first-rate job of reporting.

Portugal is a country under dictatorship, political and religious—the Roman Catholic Church seems to own and run the country completely. As in most priest-ridden countries, the standard of living, especially among the peasants, is deplorably low. Dictator Salazar talks a lot

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Problems in Production of U.S. Navy Training Films*

Orville Goldner

** From "Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers"*

Slide-films and motion pictures for the Navy are being produced under the supervision of the Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, who was directed by the Secretary of the Navy, in August, 1941, to ". . . fulfil the photographic requirements of education and training in the naval service". The Photographic Board, which made the original recommendation on which the Secretary acted, lumped the responsibility for the photographic requirements of education and training with other photographic responsibilities and assigned them all to the Bureau of Aeronautics because of its long-time experience in naval photography.

As a result of this directive, the Photographic Division of the Bureau of Aeronautics, through its Training Film Branch, serves the entire Navy in its film production programme. Requests for film productions originate from training officers in the various naval training centres maintained throughout the country, or from officers in the training divisions in Washington.

When production requests are approved by the cognisant authorities, the Training Film Branch assigns a two-man team to work with the technical advisor in outlining and producing a training film on the subject. One team member is the educational consultant, the other the project supervisor. Essentially, the project supervisor is the co-ordinator and administrator of the project for the Navy. Besides contributing the film "know how", he activates the project through his liaison relationships with the several persons jointly engaged in it—the technical advisor, the Navy or commercial producer, the educational consultant, the procurement and cataloguing departments of the Training Film Branch.

The educational consultant helps to ensure that a film, as planned, teaches. He not only defines a film's purpose but helps to plan it according to well established pedagogical principles. He finds ways to fit it into existing curricula and may assist in adapting existing curricula to the new instructional programme. In several instances it has been found that pictures have forced realignment of existing curricula.

Since the organisation of the Branch charged with responsibility for producing films for the Navy (July, 1941), the total number of projects completed is 1,692. Of these, 1,412 were slide-films and 280 were motion pictures. The total number of projects in production at this time is 1,296, of which 850 are slide-films and 446 are motion pictures. Requests for production of films on additional subjects of interest to Navy training are coming in at the rate of 200 a month —clear evidence of the Navy's interest in the medium.

Another line of evidence showing the Navy's dependence upon training films is found in the film distribution figures. In the last quarter, over 90,000 prints have been distributed. Nearly one thousand individual activities have been served. These include both ships and the nearly five hundred schools and naval training establishments ashore where men are trained before being assigned to the fleet or to which they are returned for further training after some fleet experience.

The training films the Navy makes and uses have been designed to be used in classrooms at the time in the course when they will help the instructor to standardise operations and make ideas clear to his students. They are not made to be shown as separate, uncorrelated features. And when planned for one specific group, as is most often the case, they are not expected to meet the complete needs of another group being taught things in a different way. For example, slide-films designed for use in the Aviation Service Schools for training enlisted men in maintenance and repair of aeroplanes have not been found particularly helpful for training civilian personnel in the aviation assembly and repair shops, even though both groups are working on the same model of aeroplane. The films the latter need are definitely job-analysis films on assembly and sub-assembly of parts, much too detailed to be of use in the Service Schools. The purposes served in each are different, and hence the training aids must of necessity be different too.‡

It is our task continuously to analyse the problems peculiar to and characteristic of every training situation. Training films must fit. Simply, they must assist in training or they are an expensive waste of time and strategic material.

We find it necessary to repeat frequently that we are not in the business of making films *per se;* we are in the business of making training aids. That is why in a training film programme like the Navy's there is no place for the movie making *prima donna.* Celluloid fever is easy to get, but the making of effective training materials requires analytical, straight-line thinking, planning, and execution.

When an official request reaches the Training Film Section, there are still a great many questions that have to be answered before a producer can be assigned to the task of producing the training film. A thorough job of research and preplanning must be done. Due to the problems inherent in a training programme during a war period, basic research and pre-planning take on various aspects. First, there is the research based upon standardised doctrine, good or bad, realistic or unrealistic, which has been used over a long period of time by a fairly well stabilised training activity. Second, there is the research on a training programme where there is no established doctrine—where the whole training programme is so new that a syllabus or simple outline has not been developed.

Frequently it becomes the job of the Training Film Branch to establish the doctrine along with the production of the training film. In many cases, a training activity without established doctrine permits the creation of a more effective training film than the activity that presumably has all its information frozen in outmoded handbooks and syllabi. It is far more stimulating for the project supervisor, the educational consultant, and the technical advisor to approach a problem that has not been thoroughly explored. A training film that evolves out of such a situation is almost certain to be more operational and less abstract than one that has been built out of a maze of words and formulae

If no technical advisor is indicated on a request when it arrives at the Training Film Branch, it is obvious that the Branch must insist upon the appointment of a technical advisor before the basic research on the training film project can begin. It is always hoped that the technical advisor will come to the Training Film Branch with two basic qualifications—first, that he will be a subject-matter specialist, thoroughly experienced in the technical aspects of the proposed training film; second, that he has sufficient authority to make decisions that will hold and be approved by his bureau or the activity which he represents. If the technical advisor happens to be a desk engineer with years of experience or a technical writer who has thought in terms of words and mathematics entirely when considering his subject, he almost invariably creates many difficulties for all those concerned in the production of the training film.

Let us consider tor a moment the first type of research—that based almost exclusively upon doctrine set forth in great detail in handbooks and manuals. If the subject happens to be mechanics or electricity or any one of a hundred other involved subjects on the complicated apparatus of this war, in all probability, the authors of the manuals and handbooks were engineers sitting at the desks of the manufacturer of the equipment involved. Frequently these have been considered all that is necessary for the guidance and training of competent personnel. Needless to say, these handbooks and manuals are generally one-sided—they tell the story about the equipment that the manufacturer wants to tell. And yet more than once, these engine encyclopedia, Diesel dictionaries, and radio rhetorics have been given to training film officers as scenarios. "Certainly," says the technical advisor, "what more do you want?" "Just make pictures to fit, and you'll have a beautiful training film." And, believe it or not, we've made a few along this line—abstract talking panoramas to delight the eyes and ears of our best engine Einsteins.

We have been speaking here of one kind of material that is presented as doctrine for the construction of training films. This is the over-complicated and unrealistic which makes picture planning difficult. Another kind of material presented as doctrine is the over-simplified—that kind that grew up in an unstudied training programme, in the hands of an alleged instructor who thought that generalisations were enough. This kind of material contains profound statements such as "Proceed to the engine, make adjustments preparatory to starting, turn up fuel oil to the proper level, turn throttle to recommended starting position, proceed as recommended in Section *C*, p. 32 of the Manufacturer's manual, serial number 836, *etc., etc.*"

We who are involved in the construction of training aids for the Navy know that neither of these kinds of material is sufficient as a basis or plan for an effective training film. Our job of basic research must go further. Consider for a moment the construction of training films on a

‡ The foregoing was written by Lt. Reginald Bell, U.S.N.R., Senior Educational Officer for the Training Film Branch. It is reproduced here substantially as it appeared in *Visual Review* for 1943. The remainder of the paper was written by Lt. Orville Goldner, U.S.N.R., Officer in Charge, Training Film Branch.

series of large tactical problems which change from day to day just as the war itself changes from day to day. The movement, the pattern of strategy, the war equipment that won a battle yesterday may not win the battle at some future date for which we are building, and yet, we have to make training films on these problems too. One such problem has kept us involved for over a year. In that time, tactics have changed, equipment has changed, and personnel has changed. Technical advisors who were considered authorities when we began may no longer be considered authorities, or they have been removed to fields of operation inaccessible to the Training Film Branch, for every day, more men must go to combat areas whether they are working on training films or not. It is safe to say that within the year, typewritten material a foot thick has been accumulated on this particular problem. Dozens of experts have been consulted and countless manœuvres have been watched for the purpose of accumulating authentic, operational data. There must be continuous checking and cross-checking—for an error, made real and in effect true by projection on the screen of the classroom, could conceivably lose a battle if enough people believed it and acted accordingly. Conversely, the truth projected and made real—simply and operationally—might *win* the battle. It is this admitted effectiveness that justifies the production of training films; in fact, demands it.

Such a job of research and analysis is not an easy task. It is difficult enough to get a consensus on problems where standard mechanisms are involved. It is overwhelmingly difficult to get a consensus when broad tactical problems and intricate new machines of war are involved. Often, much valuable time is lost in getting a decision on a simple point, and these delays are not easy to overcome or explain; for in the end, there is the project file in the Training Film Branch which indicates that a certain training film has been in production an inordinately long period of time. With a few projects like this, the total production programme is bound to look out of joint. But the research, pre-planning, checking, and cross-checking must be done.

The second research technique—that which is without benefit of doctrine to begin with—is largely observational. The project supervisor, educational consultant, and technical advisor travel to the training activity that is to furnish the problem and the pattern for the training film. A typical example would be the assembly of a pontoon bridge. Let us assume that this is a new activity for the Navy, that the pontoons are new, that the total job is a part of an entirely new operation which extends the function of an established Navy rating. On such a problem, the researchers scrutinise what is going on. This may take a couple of days or a couple of weeks or longer. It may mean a trip to the South Pacific or the Caribbean, to one location or many locations. But inevitably, it means a detailed analysis of work under many conditions. With the training officer in charge, project personnel attempt to determine what tools are best and what techniques are best for the job to be done, wherever and however it must be done. The training film must, of necessity, set high standards for this particular operation wherever it is shown. Perhaps the training officer had never thought of his job in terms of the best tools and best techniques; perhaps it had been done previously with whatever tools were at hand by whatever method seemed most appropriate at the moment. Obviously, this is not precise enough for the discerning eye of the camera. When a simple wrench in use is projected on the screen, it may appear at once to be either too large or too small, or badly handled. Unskilled and indecisive workmanship and inappropriate equipment become readily apparent when reviewed on the single plane of the classroom screen. A recent example of this happened in a series of films being undertaken by the Branch on the disassembly of a certain engine. The two machinist's mates assigned to appear in the films were thought to be thoroughly qualified for the job. Aboard ship in the engine room, they could undoubtedly get by as able mechanics. And yet, when the first sequences of the particular training films were projected, it became apparent immediately that these two men were inept with tools and frequently used methods that could not be considered as standards for the training film. The sequences were reshot and the films continued with more experienced mechanics who knew the proper tools and techniques.

The writing of a script for an effective training film requires first of all the ability to penetrate the obvious and the loosely accepted truths in a given situation. It requires persistence and a prying curiosity. It requires incisiveness and straight-line thinking, and with it all, the ability to put it on paper in acceptable English with an economy of words. The writer of a training film script must, of necessity, have a vivid imagination. He must be picture-minded first and word-minded second. In analysing his subject matter, he must ask himself constantly, "What is the picture at this point that will tell the story in terms of the objective?" And, having determined the picture, he must then ask, "What is the simplest meaningful statement that I can make that will extend the effectiveness of the picture and add to its retention potentiality?" The writer with genuine ability for training film production understands that he is working with a medium in which the primary value is visual and the secondary value is auditory. He knows that he is not writing lectures with pictures "to fit"; he is organising pertinent pictures of subject matter in movement, using the fewest possible words to describe, to emphasise, to extend.

Does the Training Film Branch get what it wants in the way of scripts for its films? Frequently it does, but time after time it does not. There is much revising, much compromising, and occasionally the accepting of the obviously bad in the name of urgency. Generally, no one can be blamed for the inadequacies. Perhaps, in spite of all research, sufficient data were not available to give continuity of the picture plan. Perhaps certain pictures were known to be unobtainable and without them the plan would have blind spots. Then again, perhaps, there had been insufficient experience with a given piece of equipment to furnish the facts about a certain operation.

However, there are times when script shortcomings stand out as direct evidence of the writer's refusal to accept the training film as a special instrument with a special purpose. When writers insist upon using pictorial *clichés* at the beginnings and ends of all training films, it becomes obvious that they do not know how to begin and how to end the film in terms of the objective originally set forth. It points to a limited concept of the job to be done and a definite lack of ability to work in the film medium. Words cannot describe the fatigue that comes from going to the projection room and seeing film after film begin and end with the opticals made up of the same twenty-five best shock shots of ships ploughing through the waves, big guns shooting at nothing, and planes peeling off, accompanied by ominous words in sepulchral tones on the scope of the war and the size of the job and the beauties of democracy and the beating we are going to give Hirohito, *etc., etc.* And we must not forget, indeed, cannot forget, the overloud, strident music that fits the film the way ice cream goes with dill pickles.

The writer may not wish to take credit for all this, but he sets the pattern—good or bad—and the director, the cameraman, the editor, cutter, and narrator all follow the line.

Photography itself is probably the least of our problems, Most cameramen are able to get some kind of image on the film. Inasmuch as a large part of the shooting of training fims must go on in spite of weather conditions and countless other limitations, it is generally necessary to accept photography that is adequate, rather than good. To insist upon photography that is the best possible under ideal conditions in a given situation would often delay projects beyond reasonable limits.

Producers who work on training films for the Navy are always conscious of the demands for close-ups, for better definition, and maximum depth of field. These are essential in operational training films. Of great importance also are the orientation and re-orientation shots for which the Training Film Branch asks over and over again. A training film that skips around over an engine or a ship or anything else with close-ups and medium close-ups is certain to lose and confuse the trainee. He must be orientated to the problem in the beginning, and must be re-orientated at intervals throughout the film This orientation must be operational; that is, it must be from a position in which the trainee would find himself if he were working with the real thing in a tactile relationship. Frequently, effective orientation shots are not possible in live photography, and it becomes necessary to resort to diagrams or other pictorial devices. Any device is legitimate if it achieves the purpose for which it is intended. Here again, like all the other complicated aspects of training film production, the photography is right when it gets to the screen the cogent picture information that the training situation demands.

It is not necessary to have beautiful clouds in all exterior shots and to have every Diesel mechanic backlighted in close-ups to make him glamorous, but realistic aesthetics have a place in training films. The cameraman who understands his medium, who uses his camera creatively and not like a garden hose, can combine on the screen the document of an activity in a composition of values from white to black that adds immeasurably to the value of the film and the pleasure of the audience.

Considerable time could be spent on other subjects as they relate to the production of training films. These include music, colour, animation, sound effects, narrators—their voice quality and delivery—and the subtle but emphatic values of the great range of screen devices. There are others,but they are beyond the scope of this paper.

We can look at the work being accomplished for the armed services by all the facilities of the motion picture industry with considerable satisfaction. But, in terms of the job to be done, we must look to the future with an expanding concept of the function of the motion picture and a more profound understanding of its value as a training instrument.

A REMARKABLE NEW DOCUMENTARY FILM

"WORDS AND ACTION" is the title of a new documentary film now available for distribution. It is an unusual film, even among documentaries. . . . a film which may be received with mixed feelings by some filmgoers, but will rarely be received in silence!

"Words and Actions" is a film about democracy. It shows democracy without a capital letter—the democracy that is no abstract catch-phrase to be thundered from political platform, pulpit and press . . . but the democracy that is PEOPLE—peop e working out their own salvation by the "democratic method".

Looking back over the past hundred years the public may well marvel at the social progress achieved by this same social "dynamic" . . . no more children for coal pits or chimneys, rapid advances in education, acceptance of trade unionism (once a penal offence), and many other "revolutionary and indecent" ideas. The high test of total war has spot-lighted the democratic method as it now solves new problems, and we have tried to add our tribute to the quota.

"WORDS AND ACTIONS" has been sponsored by the British Commercial Gas Association. It is now available for distribution to applicants. Details and booking form, for this and other documentary films, available free to approved borrowers, will be sent gladly on application to the Secretary, British Commercial Gas Association, 1 Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.1.

New Documentary Films

(*Continued from page 5*)

about the dignity of labour, but whether by accident or design, the people in the film all look supremely unhappy. As the commentary says, Portugal is one country where food is still abundant, but as most of it is sold to the belligerent nations, prices have been boosted beyond the means of the average citizen and wages are frozen by Government decree.

The wealthy still manage to have a very good time in Lisbon and the shots of the capital with its hordes of refugees, spies, journalists, diplomatic representatives and what-have-you are full of interest.

There is a wealth of really good material in the film, and although it steers clear of too positive a line, it is not difficult to draw your own conclusions, and for most people these conclusions will not be very flattering towards Salazar and the people who back him.

Cameramen at War. *Production:* Realist Film Unit. *Compiled by* Len Lye. *Commentary:* Raymond Glendenning. *Music:* Ernst Meyer. M.O.I. 14 minutes.

Subject: The men through whose eyes the plush-seated audience sees the blood and the sweat of the battlefields. As one watches the bombs drop on the target, the aircraft carrier shudder as it gets a hit, the wounded men struggling through the Pacific Island mud, it is easy to forget that there was a cameraman there making the pictures. However exciting or frightening the moment, the lens still had to be focused, the exposure set and the camera held steady. *Cameramen at War* is both a tribute to the men of the newsreels and the Service camera departments, as well as a record of their skill and initiative.

Propaganda value: The spectacular shots collected together here certainly make the film good entertainment, and the emphasis on the importance of the camera in both the last war and this gives the film an added weight.

Clyde Built. *Production:* Spectator Films. *Director:* Robin Carruthers. *Camera:* A. H. Luff. M.O.I. 23 mins. Non-T.

Subject: A brief account of Clyde-side today. The nature of its modern methods of shipbuilding and their relationship with tradition.

Treatment: A magazine type of film with loose continuity between dialogue and commentary episodes. The film ranges widely and for the most part superficially, yet occasionally plunges into technical detail beyond its compass.

Propaganda Value: Dubious. In its attempts to say everything, this film, in the reviewer's opinion, gets very close to saying nothing at all. It leaps madly from an apprentices' lecture to a works' committee meeting to an alibi about why American methods are inappropriate on the Clyde, to the inevitable workers watching launching and so on and on, one thing leading to another and frequently back again to something we thought we had already disposed of. The film is shapeless, prosy, yet well-meaning to the point of becoming in place a burlesque of old-style documentary. Moreover it comes to a natural, and not ungraceful end at least three times before the final fade-out.

ASSIGNMENT:—INDIA *by Maurice Lancaster*

On the Indian trip which he describes, Maurice Lancaster, British representative of **"Mareh of Time"**, *was accompanied by cameraman Bob Navarro.*

We met in Simla on Sunday, July 13th, 1941. The last time I had seen Bob was on the previous December 13th, in the black-out at Euston when he took the train north to begin his voyage to Equatorial Africa; since then he had crossed the Equator six times by foot, by car and by air, had travelled many thousands of miles in Darkest Africa with the Fighting (then Free) French, eventually landed up in Cairo and flown down to India to join me. I had come the other way round—first going to Halifax by convoy, then down to New York, and flying from there to Singapore via Honolulu and Australia. "What is the assignment?" Bob asked me, "India," I replied. "Do you know anything about it?" "No", he said, shaking his head.

I had already been two weeks in India, arriving in Bombay just as the monsoon broke. This had not encouraged me greatly, as our Producer, Louis de Rochemont had said, "There's not much you can do about the monsoon, it just comes out grey on the film, sheer waste, better try and plan your itinerary so that you can avoid it." So, after talking solidly about India, its problems and our problems with ten different people daily, all of whom told me a different story, none of whom would eat the same food and worse, few of whom would take a drink, I set off through the washed-out countryside in the Punjab Mail, armed with a copy of *The Rains Came*, to find out what the great minds of the Government of India had to suggest in the rarefied air of Simla.

Bob and I soon decided that we had better go and see things for ourselves before we began actually to shoot. So, we left Simla and made a short tour to Delhi, Allahabad, where we stayed with Mrs. Pandit Nehru's sister, and then, after a hideous 24-hour journey, to Wardha, where we had an appointment to see Mr. Gandhi. Gandhi was at the time one of the few Congress Leaders who was not in gaol.

Appointment with Gandhi

We were exhausted after our train journey, hot and dirty, also needed a square meal. Young men in the white Gandhi cap met us at the station and we piled into the ancient green Ford, the only twentieth century vehicle in Wardha, and were driven to the guest house. The guest house is used for visiting Congressmen, but was at this time empty. The first thing they asked was, "Have you got an appointment?" One of the first things I had done after my arrival in Bombay was to send by special delivery my letter of introduction to Mr. Gandhi, and had received, a few days later, a postcard (whenever possible he uses this means of communication so that the inland revenue will not benefit by the extra cost of a letter in an envelope), saying that he would be pleased to see us any day except Monday, that being his day of silence. There was no problem and after they had telephoned to his village at Sevagram, we were told to present ourselves at 4 p.m.

We were then shown our rooms and had a wash, after which a meal was served on a sort of patio. There were various places set, that is to say some grass mats were placed on the stone floor, and then there were two absurd little tables and chairs, obviously for our use. We protested against these and they were removed, and we squatted on our haunches on the floor with the rest of the company, and set to with our fingers to appease our very hearty appetites on a meal of vegetables and gye with chappattis, which were served on a large green leaf for a plate. Soon the legs ached very painfully from the squatting, but we held our positions until the meal was over.

No Electricity

Later in the day, arrayed in our cleanest white shorts and shirts, we got into the old green Ford and motored over the dusty track for a few miles until we saw ahead a collection of mud houses—very uninspiring to look at. This was it. Our thoughts immediately turned to pictures, and we began to ask such questions as where the electric light was in all the houses and model school. Electric light, said they, Gandhi leads the same simple life as all the poor peasants of India. We have no such thing at Sevagram, nor do we have any plumbing. With these problems uppermost in our minds, we were ushered into the house, or rather the room which was the house. Seated on the floor and spinning all the time while he talked, was the old man, surrounded by people who were listening to him and who occasionally asked him a question—their shoes were all outside. In a very still voice he asked us to wait a few moments, and we listened to him; then he turned to us and in the same still voice asked what he could do for us. We explained the purpose of our mission, sought his advice and suggestions. He listened most politely, and turned us down flat. That is to say, he said: "You can have everything in Sevagram but me". We protested that without him Sevagram was nothing, but without avail, and having accepted his invitation to stick around and make ourselves thoroughly at home, told him that we would return at some future date.

The next day we went to Bombay which we had decided on as a base. Here we collected an Eyemo from New York, and some tropically packed raw stock and started to work. We soon found that, charming as the Indian people are, they are not the easiest people to make a film about. Set up a camera in the street, you are immediately surrounded by a milling throng of thousands and soon the police have to come and break it up, and if you have not the right passes, will whisk you off to gaol until you explain yourself. Also, few of the policemen have any English, so that is no use explaining to them: far better to go quietly and hope that you will find a sympathetic white inspector at the station. Passes in English are of little use, as few policemen read English. Our many Indian friends were most interested in our work and helped us to line up some of the sequences. However, invariably all the actors stood in a line and gaped at the camera, although it was explained to them what action was required, and that most important, they must act as if we were not there. Our well-meaning friends would shrug their shoulders and say, "It is of no use, Indian people will always look at the camera, otherwise they are not sure that you are taking their pictures."

Bob, however, would take his camera out alone or with me and spend hours just stalking the natural bazaar shots that we got in Delhi and Calcutta and Bombay. This involved the usual patience of Job. We would have to wait around sometimes as much as an hour intent on one particular shot which we might want, and at the same time, performing the difficult task of not being at all interested. Then when the action involved happened, it was a question of having enough anticipation to stop down, focus, of having the right lens in the camera to swing round and get the fleeting ten second shot that was to prove so useful in the final editing of the film.

Indian feature pictures are I suppose, the longest in the world, anything over thirteen thousand feet. They have many studios, some well equipped, but are a little happy-go-lucky about the technical details—or, they are over cautious. There is one true story of a lab. where some sound film was being developed; outside was a notice in nine languages—"Silence—sound film being developed". Bob was in constant terror whenever a coolie picked up his camera. Invariably he balanced it on his head; then would ensue a violent scene in which the coolie would have the camera pulled off his head, and have it more or less forcibly hung round his neck by the straps.

Nineteen Thousand Miles

Our assignment took us in all eight months, during which we travelled 15,000 miles by train, and 4,000 miles by car. 26,000 feet of raw stock were exposed mainly through the Eyemo, though a Newman was also used as a reserve camera. Apart from occasionally developing a few hundred feet in Bombay, all the material was shipped by sea to New York, a voyage of at least five weeks, and we had no complaints that any of it did not arrive in first-class condition.

The tropically packed film we received from New York was immediately stored at Kodak's, who had a very good installation for keeping raw stock, and all kinds of photographic materials. In normal times, India is Kodak's third largest market for raw stock, due to the length of film involved in shooting an Indian feature film, and they have ample storage space, properly controlled for humidity and temperature so that the stock does not deteriorate. When we were on the road, Bob took the precaution of shipping every thousand feet back to Kodak as it was shot to be stored by them until such time as there was sufficient to ship. Likewise, they were shipping us raw stock in small batches wherever we were in India. We found Mr. Quirbet, the technical head, who was one of the vintage cameramen of England and France, a great help and friend to us.

After endless talks we did at last get Gandhi to allow us to bring the camera near enough to him to make some shots, but the climax of our experiences with him was at the Congress party meeting, held after the congressmen had come out of gaol, and soon after Japan had come into the war. A special "Pandal" was built at Wardha and people came to the meeting from all over India, Bob and I were the only Europeans present. The Pandal was a large hall built of cocoanut matting, and completely porous. If the

(*Continued on Page* 10)

FILM OF THE MONTH

Lone White Sail. *Production:* Moscow Children's Film Studio. *Direction:* Vladimir Legoshin.

WHAT makes a good children's film or for the matter of that, a good children's story? Adults in general tend to plump for whimsy and sentimentality, probably because they like that sort of thing themselves and it helps to satisfy the unresolved adolescence in their natures. And so we get parents eagerly buying, reading and then shoving down their children's throats reams of *Winnie the Pooh* and *The Wind in the Willows* or forcibly taking them to see *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* or *The Wizard of Oz*. The children of course conscientiously and considerately enjoy themselves, but really, as a matter of fact, they don't think much of it. The world to children is just as real as it is to us, but because of their freshness, their small size compared with adults and the fantastically slow ticking of their life-clock, everything seems ten times as vivid, ten times as real and ten times as important. And so their meat is something much more like, say, Hans Andersen (*Big Claus and Little Claus* was just about my favourite story), where everything is startlingly real, clear and matter of fact, but many times life size. Which is why *Lone White Sail* is not only a first class film anyway, but a first class film for children, even better than *Emil and the Detectives.*

The Story

Lone White Sail is a story of two 12-year-old boys' adventures after the 1905 revolution. They live on the shores of the Black Sea, so naturally they get mixed up with a sailor from the Potemkin re-entering the country from Rumania. Then after the proclamation of the so-called Liberal Constitution, they help the sailor and his friends in their unsuccessful revolt, and later help the sailor in his escape from prison. But it is not so much the story, good as it is, that counts; it's the details. One of the boys is a working class lad, grandson of a supremely (and, it looks, deservedly) unsuccessful fisherman, the other comes from a middle class family and is a young student. These two make a finely contrasted partnership, Gavrik, the fisherlad, tough, self-reliant and adult already, the student inexperienced in the ways of the world but imaginative, well-meaning, terrifically anxious to help and, because of his social status, very useful. There must be very few people who don't find their childhood, or children their lives, mirrored in some way or other in the film. Best of all perhaps is the scene where Gavrik and his pal take the escaped sailor to see Gavrik's elder brother, who is a revolutionary stalwart. Whilst the two men talk secretly, Gavrik and the student go round and make friends with the rest of the family, and there's more of working-class life and revolution in that one scene than in all of Eisenstein and Pudovkin's films put together.

But the whole film is full of things like that, all as bright and real as day, but all just slightly more than lifesize, to fit the child's viewpoint; and incidentally shot from the children's eye-level. There's a truly magnificent fishwife who would be the terror of any fisherman, let alone of his son. There's granddad coming home boozed again, denouncing all fish salesmen (hear, hear) and having to be put to bed. There's the plain clothes cop, the villain, rather like Fritz Rasp in *Emil and the Detectives*, comic, squinting and awkward but somehow very dangerous, just like the farmer who when you're apple-scrumping always manages to catch you in spite of his clumsiness. There's the appalling baby brother of the young student, with his hoarded money-box and the quick horrifying glimpse of his birthday party. There's the beautifully economical period scene of the declaration of the Liberal Constitution with the business man kissing his coachman—"Hurrah! At last we're brothers." Smack, smack. "Drive on you swine!" There's the nice button-game that Gavrik always wins, and the student's father's unfortunate attempt at enforcing tidy habits on his son. There's the burly sailor, just a little more powerful, more silent and more heroic than life, whose final friendly handshake puts the student on top of the world, standing on the cliff top and declaiming to his admiring friends his favourite poetry-piece, *Lone White Sail*, as the boat disappears romantically into the distance, taking the sailor to fresh deeds of heroism. In fact all the film is in the heroic mould. "My brother's going to get the sailor out of gaol to-day." "How on earth will he do that?" "Why blow up the gaol of course." And blow up the gaol he does, the explosion, very nicely, coming over a title in the same way that Gavrik earlier had been content at the shooting gallery with just aiming (and then having a lemonade) instead of actually firing. But the whole film is like that, you get down to the real stuff, the lemonade, without wasting your time and money over the shooting gallery. Incidentally the photography is superb.

It certainly is a pleasure to see *Lone White Sail* again amid so many of the dreary slush and falseness of the wartime films; it looks as good as or even better than when we first saw it five or six years ago. It is a funny thing that since the Soviet Film Industry announced its new policy of Socialist Realism so few of their films have come up to scratch in that particular line. We've had all sorts of would-be realism that just turned out to be propaganda or daydream, like *Natasha*, and people with a strong style of their own, like Dovzhenko, have carried on in the same good old way, but of all their films seen in this country the only ones so far that could be said to be really successful examples of Socialist Realism are *The New Teacher* and *Lone White Sail*. Perhaps Realism comes a little awkwardly to the Russian temperament, or maybe now is a difficult time for it. Realism, I should say, arises from the confidence engendered by an optimistic philosophy, which presents you with a cut-and-dried solution to the problems of the universe. If you are confident enough that you have the solution to all problems, you must believe that to set down things just as they are is to prove your case; the difficulty being only to decide what they really are. For instance the great nineteenth century age of scientific materialism gave rise to the confident art of men like Zola, whose wonderful literary edifice was based on some doctor's piddling little theory of heredity by which he reckoned to explain the workings of the universe. The theory is dead but the books live on. But when the great tide of science and realism represented by men like Zola and Dickens, swept into Russia, the result was men like Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, who may have thought they were being realist, but who were something very different. They simply hadn't got it in them to believe the scientific nonsense. And of course as time went on and people began to realise that scientific materialism was ushering in, not the millennium but armageddon, optimism gave way to defeatism and realism to escapism. Today as we struggle gradually towards a faith better founded and more practical than the brave new world of the nineteenth century dreamers, a new realism begins to show itself again. And what better place to show itself than Russia? But apart from Gerasimov and Legoshin, there has been not all that much sign of it yet. It would be interesting to know more about Vladimir Legoshin: this is, I think, the only film of his to be seen over here. Gerasimov obviously gets his confidence from being one of the younger generation, from growing up with and being part of the constructive epoch of the revolution. The director of *Lone White Sail* seems so much at home with all sorts of people and problems that it would be difficult to believe that he is a young man who has never been outside the U.S.S.R. But in any case the war—and this is one of its greatest horrors—must have set Russia back dreadfully, and it may be years before we can hope for films like *Lone White Sail* and *The New Teacher* again. In the end, though, the new Socialist Realism is bound to come and, it's up to us in England to be in there with it.

Assignment:—India

(*Continued from page* 9)

sun shone, one could make perfectly good pictures with natural light, but if it were overcast, artificial light would be needed. As nobody knew at what time Gandhi would speak, it was necessary for us to take all precautions, and Bob erected some photofloods above the speaker's dais, like spotlights on a stage.

The meeting opened on a gloomy note with some maidens chanting a dirge, and as soon as that was over, a messenger came to us and said that Gandhi insisted that the lights were put out. This we did with very poor grace, and sat waiting and praying that when his turn came to speak, there would be sufficient natural light for us to make our shots. At last he got up and Bob was stealthily making a few shots, when all of a sudden, an Indian still photographer jumped up and let off a flash bulb. The old man stopped speaking, attendants rushed in and threw the photographer out, also tried to do the same thing to us. Then ensued a long discourse on the evil ways of photographers, and the threat that if he heard so much as the noise of another camera, he would leave the meeting. Concluding with some bitterness that he had forgotten what he was talking about. You can imagine how popular we were with the thousands of followers who had come from all parts of India to hear the words of wisdom fall from the old man's lips.

With the entry of Japan and the United States in the war, any misgivings we might have had that India would never make front page news, vanished. And when Sir Stafford Cripps visited India, two months after our departure, our editors were able to release two consecutive *March of Time* issues, which incorporated scenes of every aspect we had covered during our eight months production.

FILM GRAMMAR
By Arthur Elton

AFTER the war the 16mm. film camera and the 16mm. film projector will be mass produced, and it is reasonable to suppose that the prices of these pieces of equipment will fall. This means that everyone who can afford a portable typewriter will also be able to afford a film camera. The film camera and the film projector will become as necessary as the typewriter, the fountain pen and the watch. The day is upon us when films can be printed cheaply, and can be made available to everyone who owns a projector. There will be lending libraries of films in every town, as there are now lending libraries of books. Everyone will have at his disposal a new means of self-expression.

If the film is to be used to its best purpose, everyone will have to learn the grammar and syntax of film making. At present, film making is largely confined to the professional. Though the film industry has produced its great and less great novels and poetry, it has not yet produced parish magazines, learned periodicals, local papers, minority pamphlets, and all the other commonplaces of literature and free speech. These are on the way.

Illiteracy?

Disadvantages as well as benefits arise from the easy acquisition of film cameras and projectors. For centuries, writing and reading were confined to the learned minorities in monasteries and abbeys. Very gradually indeed the common man learnt to read and write. Very gradually he fought for and won freedom of speech. In the case of the film, the common man is going to be presented suddenly with the instruments for self-expression by film. Within two years of the end of the war the market may be flooded with cameras. Is the common man going to take the pains to learn the grammar of film for clear expression in the same way as he learns the grammar of the written language? Or is the world for years to come to be filled with "illiterate" films? I do not mean that the common man must acquire the intricacies of film grammar and expression in the way in which a professional must do, but I mean that he must become as familiar with the elements of film craft, as writers of letters and pamphlets and parish magazines are familiar with the elements of writing. For I hope the film will be used by everyone who wants to record conditions in their home town or village, or wants to publish an account of an experiment, or a guide to local beauty spots, or an analysis of transport conditions, or an idea for town-planning, or any of the thousand and one things which contribute to the social and personal life of the individual and which are worth sharing with others.

The danger of "illiterate" film babel is a real one. For example, many scientists to-day are making their own films. Though most of them have mastered the principles of photography, few of them have mastered the grammar of film. Though sometimes literary expression by scientific workers is defective to the point of obscurantism, their films, I fear, are often worse still, stumbling, inconsequent, incomprehensible, and lacking in context and continuity. They are, not so much vehicles of expression, as lecture notes, and often bad lecture notes at that. (There are, of course, exceptions, such as the beautiful films on surface tension and Brownian Movement, made at the Royal Technical College in Glasgow.)

The film is an unmatched method for the mass diffusion of knowledge, but so long as its muddled make-up compels the presence of its maker, or a specially rehearsed lecturer, to explain it before it can be understood, nine-tenths of its value is lost. It has even less value than a duplicated memorandum. If the film is to fulfil the valuable purpose of a moving blackboard for teaching purposes, it still must be so shaped as to be useful for any lecturer who wishes to teach by it.

Unfortunately, illiterate films pass by unnoticed. The person who cannot read or write is instantly aware of his handicap. He usually cannot get more than a humble labouring job, and he cannot properly take part in democratic government. The person who makes an ungrammatical film does not notice his handicaps. It is society which suffers, and not the individual. Mass education in film grammar is a big task, and no one has yet attended to it. It will be necessary to add instruction in film making to the curriculum of our schools, and to open classes in film making for adults.

There are few, or no, simple text books on how to make a film, though there are thousands on how to take a photograph. This gap must be filled. For the day is soon coming when any organisation without a film camera will seem as backward as an organisation without a typewriter. The same will presently be true of the individual.

Martyn Wilson, M.M.

BEFORE the war, Martyn Wilson worked at Realist, and before that he worked at Scottish Films in Glasgow. He was a plump, easy going young man, with what is very rare in Scotsmen, the ability to take a joke against himself. One of the jokes happened after he had been in the Army for a couple of years. Walking across the courtyard on a dark winter's morning, with a pint mug of boiling hot shaving water, he slipped and as he jerked backwards the pint of boiling water was shot straight up into the air. As he leant forward to regain his balance the pint of water hit him smack in the back of the neck and he was in bandages for about a week afterwards. But he thought it was funny.

Later, Wilson was transferred to the Army Film Unit and became a Sergeant cameraman. His first real operation was the landing in North Africa. He landed with Commandos at Cap Ferrat, but his boat, unfortunately, hit a submerged sandbank and a human chain had to be formed to get the men ashore; Wilson, encumbered as he was with camera and stock, could not go along the chain and had to jump for it; he went to the bottom in ten feet of water. But somehow he managed to get ashore, with his camera which was by then in a fairly bad condition. Whilst looking around for something or someone on which to plant the camera, they were attacked by ambush. The man with Wilson was killed, and Wilson, grabbing his Bren gun, fought his way back to the boat.

Wilson was with Major Stewart all through the North African campaign, at Sedjenae, in the Battle at Banana Ridge and with the first American troops to enter Bizerta.

For gallant and distinguished service Sergeant Wilson has been awarded the Military Medal.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MONTHLY—ONE SHILLING

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No. 15 THE WOLF AND THE BOW

RFU

A Hunter one day went out with Bow and Arrows. He managed to shoot and kill a Goat, which he threw on his shoulders and began to carry along. But spying a Boar, he threw down the Goat, and shot at the Boar and wounded him. The Boar then rushed at the Hunter, and after goring him to death, himself fell dead by the Man's side.

Scenting the blood, a Wolf came to the place where the Goat, the Boar, the Man, and his Bow all lay. The Wolf was glad, and said, "Now I shall have enough to eat for a long time. I will not eat everything at once, but little by little, that nothing may be lost. First I will eat the tougher things, and then I will dine on what is soft and sweet."

Then he began to gnaw the sinews of the Bow: but when he bit through the string, the Bow sprang back and struck him so violently, that the blow killed him.

Then the other Wolves, that had scented a feast from afar, came in their numbers, and ate up the Hunter, the Goat, the Boar, and their fellow-Wolf.

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Film Societies

The Leys Scientific Film Society started in Cambridge in 1932 and has shown fortnightly film programmes for over ten years to about 60 members. An important piece of work carried out by the committee in the first three years, was the compiling of a list of 300 scientific films held by scientific institutions, private individuals and industrial concerns. This work involved making contact with many scientific industries, university laboratories and research institutions in Great Britain. The addresss of the film owners and the conditions of borrowing were compiled and circulated to a few kindred societies.

At many meetings it was possible to show biological and natural history films produced in Cambridge and to hear from the producers how their work was carried out. High speed scientific films were always popular. On several occasions, members of the society were able to visit research laboratories and see research workers making their films.

An open meeting was held each term for non-members.

For the last three years, the School has been in Scotland but the membership of the society has been maintained.

Farnborough Scientific Film Society gave three shows last summer and when a winter season was announced the full membership of 250 was subscribed. Sub-standard versions of scientific films and documentaries such as *Enough to Eat*, *Housing Problems*, *Face of Britain* and *Children at School* are shown. It is hoped to include in each programme a technical or research film with appropriate commentary. Plans are also being made to give some shows of technical training films to local scientists and engineers. The Secretary is E. W. Simon, 134 Ship Lane, Farnborough, Hants.

The Leicester City Libraries continue their policy of film shows arranged to illustrate a particular subject. On the 2nd and 3rd of March the subject was "Home Front Again" and the films shown included *C.E.M.A.*, *Blood Transfusion* and *Worker and War Front No.* 4. On the 16th and 17th of March the subject is "Plan for To-morrow" and there will be films about town planning.

The Manchester and Salford Film Society will show on March 26th *Blood Transfusion*, *Right to Work*, *Right to Rest* and *Tarakanova*. There was a lecture on March 11th on "Cine-Cameras" and on April 1st a discussion on "Films and Progress".

Beginning with this issue "Documentary News Letter" will be published regularly every other month. Owing to mounting production costs we regret that we cannot make a corresponding adjustment in subscription rates which will remain at 6 - for one year (six issues) and 3 - for a half year (three issues). Single copies will be 1 - each. Subscriptions expiring before March 30th, 1944, and renewed before that date will be accepted on the old rates, which will mean that 6 buys D.N.L. for two years and 3 - buys D.N.L. for one year. The same applies to unexpired subscriptions.

The Index for 1943 is contained in a separate sheet enclosed with this issue.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

No. 2 1944

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VOL. 5 NO. 2 PUBLISHED BY FILM CENTRE, 34 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON W.1 ONE SHILLING

Mr. Rank and the Educational Film

ORGANISATIONS, committees, individuals are everywhere active in the preparation of documents, memoranda, plans, which will define the future of the educational film. It is clear that Mr. Rank, with religious as well as industrial interest, is not behindhand in recognising the importance of this powerful spiritual instrument. Clearly Mr. Rank has a plan. To predict its economic basis we must consider Mr. Rank as a millionaire and an amateur economist; to predict the content of his educational films we must consider him as a millionaire, a Methodist and an amateur politician. In all these rôles we must take most fully into account his sincerity, his determination and his conviction of his rightness. Mr. Rank has a nostalgia for orthodox mid-nineteenth century economics. He believes in unbridled private enterprise under the sole surveillance of God. He does not understand why people of the twentieth century have found such divine safeguards inadequate, nor why deductions affecting post-war activity have been drawn from the fact that when a war has to be won private commercial enterprise is revealed as a luxury we cannot afford and the forerunner of private commercial monopoly.

Civilisation has moved past the point where industry may be left to create its own markets and then enjoy the exclusive benefits of supplying them without reference to public needs. Yet, knowing Mr. Rank's affections for the methods and indeed for the errors of the past, for the outworn economic theories of the last century and for the tradition of financial profligacy which grew up in the British film industry in the 1930s, we feel pretty confident that he will look to the past rather than to the future in laying his plans for educational films; that he will seek to create a market by selling projectors to schools and will then seek to supply the market by selling films to feed the projectors. It is an old, tried method and the fact that it has already failed will scarcely discourage Mr. Rank. If anyone should venture to question the content of the educational films with which he will service school projectors, then Mr. Rank will most certainly say that no one is compelled to buy his films—if they don't like them they may leave them. (For still a few more years yet we must expect to hear this ancient argument raised in defence of the right to exploit a public need for private profit.)

Yet let us not minimise the superficial attractions of the kind of plan which may soon be dangled before the guardians of the public purse. Why spend the taxpayers' money, they will be asked, on the production of educational films when the film industry is prepared to make them itself and offer them for purchase by schools and local educational authorities just as if they were text-books? The saving for the taxpayer is of course illusory since the commercial producer —whatever production method is chosen—must recover his production costs from educational funds. Whether he does so by sale of copies plus profits on projector sales, or by making the films under a sponsorship contract, does not affect this principle. Moreover the argument that the State should not sponsor production, and the text-book analogy, both break down when we consider what control exists over the content of educational films which are produced simply and solely as a commercial speculation. A big film combine moving into this field with adequate finance could be sure of producing such a high proportion of the total educational film output as virtually to restrict the choice available to its own product: the educational authorities would have to accept the output of the monopoly or abandon any attempt to make full use of the educational film. The monopoly would therefore find itself in a position of dictation with regard to subject-matter and style of presentation. Films would come increasingly to represent the educational views of the commercial group concerned and subjects would be chosen, not necessarily with a view to covering the whole educational field in accordance with educational needs, but most likely with an eye to those subjects for which there was likely to be the biggest demand and therefore the greatest number of copies sold. Just as it has proved necessary publicly to control the water-supply and the postal services in order that these amenities shall be extended to the unfavourably circumstanced citizen who represents an uneconomic proposition to commercial speculators, so the whole range of educational needs, large and small, will only be met if the driving force behind the production and distribution machinery is uncommercial in motive.

It will be argued that if the sponsorship of educational films is left to the Government of the day then these films inevitably will reflect its political views. The dangers of bureaucracy will be trotted out yet once again for our horrified inspection and we shall be assured that it is only during the storms of war that the ship of state needs to be under public control. The answer clearly is that education in the post-war period will be a matter as vitally important as any that faces us to-day. It will be a matter of direct public concern the development of which must be guided in the public interest by the elected representatives of the people. No private group or commercial interest must be allowed to usurp the power of direction which belongs to the community as a whole. It is true that in this as in an increasing number of other fields the powers of the Government of the day will be increased and the influences of bad government will to that extent be multiplied. This is a problem inseparable from the democratic method, and a problem which must be solved by electing a Government worthy of its wider powers and functions. The good democrat does not fear the power of the community as wielded by his elected Government. The alternative, in the field of education as in others, is to leave power in the hands of the vested interests and to risk consequences of which we scarcely need remind our readers at this particular time in history.

PATIENCE OR STRIP-POKER?

THE poor old British Film Industry is always facing some problem or another, and just now it's got enough to keep its united brainpans buzzing for a long time. Things aren't helped by the fact that it seldom manages to achieve unanimity either of thought or action—a fact which is particularly noticeable at the present time.

On the other hand, the horizon is not entirely black. In the last war, the industry virtually passed out through malnutrition and was only revived in the twenties by some doubtful injections of Quota, which put the patient on his feet but also induced a severe attack of the quickies. This time, despite man-power problems, rising costs, blitz, and requisitioned studios full of canned goods and white collar workers, the production side has kept going, even if with a smallish output. No mean achievement, especially when you consider that in the late Thirties the whole trade was still in the process of climbing out of the mess into which the wicked fairies Boom and Speculation had hurled it. Moreover, even the conservatism of the movie business has been cracked open by the impact of war, and there are a lot of signs of fresher approaches to better subjects, and of the emergence of a truly national film style.

All these hopeful signs only make the present problems more serious and the need to solve them all the more urgent.

Opposing Factions

The scene is rather like a powerful battle landscape of the old school, except that in addition to the thunder and lightning and rolling stormclouds of our old friend Nature there are a lot of confused explosions of maroons and squibs and smoke bombs produced by the advance guards of the opposing Film Factions. On the one side are the cohorts of Big Money and Big Production Values, formed up in vertically integrated groups (or ranks). Some of them are flying the tattered banners whose decoration is a crossed prudential. Others flaunt the Flour-de-Lys. Others again show a simple Stars and Stripes superimposed on the Union Jack. On the other side stand those whose motto is "Limited expenditure and recoup from the Home Market". A more motley collection, and less disciplined—but with the advantage of being less disposed to internecine conflict than their opponents. Their flags fly with equal bravery—here a banner with the device of a parish pump couchant on a yule log, there the pennant of St. Michael at All Angles . . . . And seated a little apart in a hastily dug trench, wearing tin helmets kindly supplied by the President of the Board of Trade, is a potential armistice commission consisting of the Squires Palache, Guedella, Plant and Citrine.

The battle is incredibly confused. In the fitful flashes you are just as likely to see friend hitting friend a sharp crack from behind as you are to see foe taking foe into the NAAFI for a quiet get together about a temporary alliance. But sooner or later one side or the other must win.

Costs and World Markets

The trouble is of course that the issues keep on getting confused. Everyone is agreed that we need a truly national film industry, and need equally a share in the world's screen time. The methods of achieving this, however, are the source of the conflict. The danger of domination by United States interests is clear enough. But on the other hand you have big interests, associated especially with the names of Rank and Korda, who claim that we must make films costing from a quarter to half a million, and break into world markets on production values comparable with those of Hollywood. On the other hand are the smaller independent groups at Ealing and Elstree, who would limit expenditure to from fifty to a hundred thousand, in the expectation of gearing their economics to home cinemas, breaking into world markets on merit, as specifically British products, but not depending—at any rate for some time—on receipts from overseas. (The Big Money boys claim that the others won't have a chance to break in at all on this basis.)

You take your choice. Here come *Henry V* and *Caesar and Cleopatra*, which between them may involve anything up to £1,000,000. Or you can have the modest cash value of *San Demetrio London* and *Millions Like Us*, which, at a guess, don't represent more than £180,000 between them. Ah, but don't forget *In Which We Serve*, which cost a quarter of a million and (so they say) made its money; a first class film, truly British. The answer may well be that *In Which We Serve* was a production so exceptional as to prove the rule. Of course, there's always *Colonel Blimp*. And *The Canterbury Tale* and *The Tawny Pipit* are just around the corner. . . .

Films of Merit

For our part, we warm to the small money school. We like the intrinsic values to be found in *Millions Like Us*, an £80,000 film which trotted out of a surprising corner of the Rank stables, and in which Launder and Gilliatt put the ordinary men and women of this country on the screen with a sincerity and humanity which should command universal and not merely parochial success. We believe that given the chance (will it get it?) it should be widely successful in the United States. We like the patient honesty of *San Demetrio, London*. We like it all the more because we can see a straight line of development in the Balcon team at Ealing (and we do not forget the value of Cavalcanti and Watt in this respect) which has travelled from the uncertainties of *Convoy* and *Contraband* through *The Foreman went to France* and *Nine Men* to *San Demetrio*.

Nor do we believe that there is no market for this type of film overseas. We agree with Balcon that there has never been any proof that, say,the U.S. public doesn't like this sort of film. The U.S. public at large has never had a chance to indicate its opinion.

The Alternatives

Of course it will need time and patience, and perhaps Government assistance of varying kinds, to achieve world markets on this scale. More co-ordination of effort among the smaller groups will be required. But what is the alternative? The enormous risk involved in over-capitalisation and over-expenditure in one of the world's most uncertain markets; the development of monopolistic controls which, if successful, will put the British industry under the absolute control of one man, or group of men, to a degree which—however good their original intentions—cannot be healthy in a medium so powerful in its influence over men's minds. If unsuccessful, a deal with the U.S. interests on their own terms, or total collapse (as in 1937), with the necessity this time for the Government to step in and clear up the mess. For heaven's sake, if Government is to be practically interested (and we believe for reasons of national well-being it must be), let's have it come in at the constructive stage for once, rather than on the merely negative job of shoring up a brave new building which has unexpectedly become slum-property.

Whichever choice is made, we still have a long way to go. There are plenty of shoddy ideas and shoddy films on both sides of the fence. But never forget a shoddy film can cost a large lump of money. You don't make bad material any stronger by coating it with platinum.

It's a pity it's so difficult to get real unity in the film industry here. It shows signs of getting good, but it's growing up in a hard, hard world, and its economic fate is in danger of being tied up with other issues which have little to do with the real meaning and values of movie.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Comings and Goings

DURING THE PAST month or two there have been a number of significant transatlantic trips in the interests of film propaganda. Basil Wright is back refreshed by the sight of Canadian progress, particularly in the non-theatrical field, whilst George Archibald has returned to assumed the post of Controller of Home and Films Divisions in the Ministry of Information. This appointment has had the effect of elevating Tom Baird into Archibald's former post of Films Division representative in the United States. Baird pioneered, under John Grierson's guidance, in the building up of non-theatrical distribution in this country, and did much to lay the foundations of what has pretty certainly become a permanent part of our national life.

The most mysterious journey was made by Alfred Hitchcock who left Hollywood for a few months to make in British studios some official shorts intended for eventual distribution in liberated Europe, and who has now returned to America and to his more permanent pursuits. The nature of Hitchcock's work remains shrouded in appropriately melodramatic mystery and we have as yet had no opportunity of judging whether this first-rate technician has blossomed out into a good propagandist.

Something Positive

A.C.T. HAVE PRODUCED a most valuable and timely document in their *Memorandum on Documentary and Educational Films* which reaches us as we go to press. It reviews the whole field of specialised film making, and draws therefrom conclusions which, we hope, will be of influence in high places, and particularly the Board of Education. Special emphasis is laid on the impossibility of separating planned production from planned projection—a point which should be self-evident but which is always being overlooked, particularly as regards films for schools. At a time when monopolistic groups are casting covetous eyes on the whole educational field, A.C.T.'s memorandum is of especial importance, stating as it does a sober and cogent case for the production and use of films for the community by the community. For, whatever may have been the shortcomings of Government film-sponsorship during the past five years, the net result of the great expansion of the documentary film for purposes of propaganda, information, exposition and education will be an incalculable benefit to the nation, provided always that no attempts are made, on grounds of "economy", to revert to the pre-war situation. This, as the Memorandum rightly points out, would only hold back "full development of the use of such films for the benefit of the community". Supplies of the A.C.T. Memorandum are limited by the usual paper shortage but we understand that a few copies are still available from Assoc. of Cine-Technicians, 9 Bromefield, Stanmore, Middlesex. Teachers in particular would do well to get copies and read, mark, learn and inwardly digest them.

Newsreels in Germany

A FAIRLY SUBSTANTIAL report on the situation of Newsreel cinemas in Germany, which slipped through from Berlin *via* Switzerland, throws an interesting spotlight on the changing conditions over there owing to the war, in respect of documentaries.

There was, so we are told, a real boom in newsreel cinemas only a few years ago; cinemas which specialised in programmes of several newsreels plus cartoons and educationals, proved so successful that theatres of this type were opened all over the country in increasing numbers. Then, the situation was changed by the war. Overseas connections were interrupted. There was one newsreel only available instead of a great many. The world reservoir of educationals and cartoons was cut off. Scores of newsreel cinemas had to close down or turn to showing old feature films. But, so strong has been the demand of the public for that type of film programme that, in the first six months of 1943, the number of newsreel cinemas had been doubled again, in spite of all the difficulties; more have been, and will be, opened or re-opened since. Such (says the report) is the hunger of the public for actual topics. Hence the vast European documentary production that has been started by the Nazi film industry, with units sent to Spain, France, the Low Countries, Denmark, Norway, Rumania, Greece, Italy and so forth. Here are some titles: *Strolling Through Madrid, Ancient Amsterdam, A Day in Barcelona, Eternal Works* (on bronze casting in Paris), *Cattle Breeding in France*. . . .

This report, as a whole, presents some valuable clues for both the present and the future. It betrays, when properly scrutinised, the German public's desire for even the slightest opportunity of having a glimpse into the outside world, as shown in foreign newsreels and cartoons, from which they have been cut off by Nazi prohibition of foreign journals, etc., for eleven years. It shows, at the same time, a public preference for any factual films, taken abroad, to the usual fare of propaganda or escapist features, as well as of Nazi speeches and articles.

If this is the correct interpretation of that Berlin report there appears to be an implication in the present situation as regards the post-war future. Documentary films seem to be predestined to play a prominent part in the moral reconstruction of the German public. These popular newsreel cinemas may prove the most suitable schools or lecture halls; and documentaries the most efficient and welcome teachers if they are produced with a view to serving this particular purpose.

[We are indebted to Mr. H. H. Wollenberg for the information contained in this note.]

D.F.C.

WE CONGRATULATE Pat Moyna on the award of the D.F.C. The terms of the official citation are as follows: "Acting Squadron Leader Edward Patrick Gordon Moyna, R.A.F.V.R. This officer has participated in a large number of sorties against a wide variety of important and well defended targets. He has displayed exceptional skill and great gallantry and his efforts to make every sortie a success have set an example of the highest order."

Moyna has been for many years a most valuable member of the documentary movement, and it is a source of great gratification to his many friends and co-workers that his merits in a job which is dangerous and hazardous enough without the extra problems and pre-occupations of cinematography have been so suitably rewarded.

Don't look now, but . . .

IN A STATEMENT released to the American press by the "Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals" there occurs, among other plums, the following sentence: "In our special field of Motion Pictures we resent the growing impression that the industry is made up, and dominated by, Communists, radicals and crackpots." Whether or not the phrase "made up" refers exclusively to Max Factor and his merry men, the "domination" idea suggests the possibility of a glorious witch hunt, involving more particularly Donald Duck, the Marx Brothers and "Red" Skelton. The question of allocating the adjective "crackpot" is one which few students of Hollywood would care to undertake unless they were rich enough to stand a series of libel actions.

The elaborate statement of this mysteriously indignant Alliance is a joke at first, second and third reading. Yet we feel sure that our American allies will forgive us if we say that their sense of humour in such matters is not always dependable. We hope they are ready to laugh out of court any requests which may now be made to ban enlightened Hollywood themes merely because they might give substance to the charge which has been so gratuitously (but perhaps ingeniously) invented by the body concerned with the "Preservation of American Ideals". In our view Hollywood is "made up, and dominated by" people obsessed with the preservation of American ideals.

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Naples is a Battlefield. *Production:* R.A.F. and Army Film Units. M.O.I. 15 mins.
Subject: Getting Naples under way again after its evacuation by the Germans.
Treatment: This film is surprisingly honest and outspoken for the Ministry of Information. I have a feeling that they must have missed the point of it. Out of an assorted collection of newsreel-type material, some of which we have already seen in the weekly reels, emerges a picture which gives you a clearer idea of what the war is all about than you usually get from an official documentary. Yes, *Desert Victory* and the like are certainly not excepted. First they give you, very nicely, the old Naples—the beautiful sun-swept bay, the romantic tenor bawling as only an Italian can, all the decorative husk inside which you easily picture the festering kernel of Fascism, the filth and poverty, the Ovra and the rubber truncheon, the easily bought official and the workman peasant debauched by years of defeatism. Then the German demolitions, and the Allied liberators move in, to find a city with no power, no water, no public services and a frantic population. As the time-bombs begin to go off, leaving mangled bodies and the blood-covered injured sprawling on the pavements, the Italian police dash through the crowd, lashing out wildly in all directions, and a half frenzied queue of women crush against the wall two pathetic, helpless American M.P.s who have come 4,000 miles all the way to Europe to give the natives freedom and democracy. Meanwhile, whilst the docks are got going again and the stuff piles up, food or shells, bombs or civilian goods, a confused heap that no bomb could miss, the population has gone to the sewers for water and typhus and typhoid is raging. Finally power and water are restored, the peasants bring their produce in again and Naples gradually staggers back to its feet. Against the background of this confusion, you think of the decision to peg the lira at 400 to £1, which, according to the *Economist*, has stripped Southern Italy worse than ever she was by Germany. The great virtue of this film is that it shows up the empty shell of our civilian "principles" against the background of hard fact. It ends on the note that this is Naples, one city only among thousands that will have to be brought alive again, and the thought it leaves, though this is not explicit, is that in such an inexorable grind of human courage, violence and misery, our principles will have to be a good deal stronger and more honest.
Propaganda Value: First rate.

Naval Log of Victory. No. 7. 9th year. *March of Time.* 20 mins.
Subject Matter: The changing balance of naval power.
Treatment: March of Time is right back at the top of its form in this review of naval history since Pearl Harbour. The material is exciting and well selected, including some footage from Japanese newsreels that we have not seen before. It is extremely well cut, the editing showing a keen appreciation of logical progression and dramatic tempo—something that has been lacking in recent issues.

The balance of naval power as between the Axis and the Allied Nations was seriously affected by the loss of nineteen ships at Pearl Harbour, and the story shows how that balance has now been re-adjusted, despite the loss of Wake Island, Hong Kong, and Singapore, and with supply routes across the Atlantic and to the Northern Russian ports open to constant attack from Axis submarines and planes. This new strength is attributed to the enormous capacity of the Allies for new ship construction, which more than compensates for the losses. Charts are used from time to time to show the relative strength of the naval powers at different stages of the war, but their effectiveness is marred by the rapidity with which they are presented. The audience has no time to assimilate the essential figures.
Propaganda Value: Students of the subtle art of partisan propaganda in what purports to be objective reporting will not fail to note the implied suggestion that it is America that has contributed most towards achieving the present healthy state of affairs. It may be considered ungenerous even to mention the point (no doubt it is purely unintentional) but it is amusing to watch how it is done.

Winter Work in the Garden. *Production:* Realist Film Unit. *Direction:* Bert Pearl. *Camera:* Cyril Phillips. M.O.I. 10 mins. Non. T.
Even to those philistines who cultivate not even a window box, these Gardening Films show the fascination of turning a few square yards of earth into something alive and useful.

Winter is shown as a time for preparation—time which must be used well if the season that follows is to be productive. The ground must be dug—not just anyhow, but scientifically; by banking it up into long rows, the greatest possible surface is exposed to the beneficial disrupting action of frost. According to the type of soil, it may need treatment by compost or lime. Root crops, left in the ground till now, are taken up as they are wanted. Allotment products, such as seed potatoes, in store for later use, need periodical attention.

The gardener's wife and children come and help him, warming the film with a light but effective human interest. The gardener's neighbour also has a plot of land; it serves to bring out a point not covered in the "featured" allotment. The treatment of the story thus runs smoothly, discursive though the subject tends to be. The photography captures well the gentle light appropriate to the season.
Propaganda Value: A quietly persuasive film, which can instil enthusiasm for allotment work even among the uninitiated. It should keep the allotment workers keen at a time when enthusiasm may be expected to drop.

The Ministry of Health have presumably given up the idea of persuading people to cook unpeeled potatoes, judging from the shot of snow-white spuds at the end.

Unfinished Journey. Concannen Productions: for Polish Film Unit. 10 mins.
Subject: Biography of General Sikorsky.
Treatment: Scenes of rural England, in peace and quiet, show us a country village, strangely untouched by war. But overhead, fighter planes roar, discordantly. Out of key though they may seem, it is because of them that this English village has its peace. Moreover the film shows a

(*continued on page* 21)

CATALOGUE OF FILMS MADE BY THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION IN 1943

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NOTES AND ABBREVIATIONS

Film titles in brackets are alternative titles of films listed elsewhere in the catalogue.
Names of people in brackets do not appear on credit titles.

15-M: Fifteen minute film release.
T: Mainly Theatrical Release.
N.T.: Mainly Non-Theatrical Release.
I: Instructional.
C.F.L.: Listed in Central Film Library catalogue.
W: Withdrawn
O: Despatched Overseas.
OO: Mainly for Overseas use.
OOO: Wholly for Overseas use.

1. THEATRICAL AND NON-THEATRICAL RELEASES

TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES T	RELEASE DATES NT	LENGTH	NOTES
(Autumn on the Farm)		See "Crown of the Year"						
Before the Raid	T O	Crown	I. Dalrymple	J. Weiss	9/43	—	3,113	
Biter Bit, The	15-M	Coombe	Sir A. Korda	—	9/43	—	1,290	Partly compilation
Boiler House Practice	CFL I	C.W.S.	—	G. Wynn	—	6/43	2,374	
Breathing Space	CFL OO	Strand	A. Shaw	—	—	9/43	2,845	By various directors. Despatched 5/43. 1-reel version for English-speaking territories.
Britain Beats the Clock	OOO	Paramount	(T. Cummins)	—	—	—	1,464	Despatched 2/43
Browned Off	T O	Strand	D. Taylor	C. Delatour	—	—	3,359	Release not yet fixed
Butterfly Bomb	CFL I	Verity	—	D. Birt	—	11/43	442	
Cameramen at War	CFL 15-M	Realist	—	Len Lye	11/43	3/44	1,313	Compilation
Canteen Command	OOO	Spectator	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	—	1,034	Despatched 6/43
Catering	CFL I	Spectator	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	11/43	1,843	
Cereal Seed Disinfection	CFL I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	19/43	1,131	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
China	CFL NT O	P. Rotha Prods.	D. Alexander	Budge Cooper	—	9/43	1,410	Compilation
Cine Sports Magazine No. 3	OOO	G.B.I.	—	—	—	—	1,001	Despatched 2/43
No. 4							919	" 3/43
No. 5							889	" 4/43
No. 6							931	" 5/43
No. 7							927	" 6/43
No. 8							915	" 7/43
No. 9							938	" 8/43
No. 10							875	" 9/43
No. 11							958	" 10/43
No. 12							956	" 11/43
No. 13	OOO	G.B.S.S.	—	—	—	—	960	" 12/43
Citizens of Tomorrow	OOO	Realist	(J. Taylor)	B. Smith	—	1/44	2,043	For Latin America. An English version is to be prepared
Clean Milk	CFL I O	Realist	—	Margaret Thomson	—	6/43	1,395	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Close Quarters	T O	Crown	I. Dalrymple	J. Lee	7/43	1/44	6,770	A 2-reel version titled "Up Periscope" has been made for N.T. use
Clyde Built	CFL NT O	Spectator	M. Hankinson	R. Carruthers	—	9/43	2,060	
Coalminer	O	Strand	B. Wright	C. Delatour	—	9/43	1,384	Not yet released in Britain
Come Again	OOO	Crown	—	Ralph Elton	—	—	1,564	Despatched 10/43
Common Cause	CFL NT O	Verity	—	H. Cass	—	1/43	1,048	
Convoy to Malta		See "Malta Convoy"						
Crown of the Year	CFL 15-M O	Green Park	—	R. Keene	7/43	11/43	1,300	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Danger Area	CFL NT O	Verity	H. Cass	H. Cass	—	10/43	1,934	
Debris Clearance	CFL I O	Shell	E. Anstey	A. Womersley	—	11/43	1,034	
Debris Tunnelling	CFL I O	Shell	E. Anstey	K. Mander	—	6/43	1,651	
Defeat Tuberculosis	CFL NT O	Seven League	—	H. Nieter	—	9/43	903	Assoc. Producer: Paul Rotha
Dig for Victory (2)	OOO	Spectator	—	—	—	—	595	Compilation for U.S.S.R. Despatched 7/43
Doing Without	OOO	Spectator	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	—	1,214	Despatched 10/43
Eggs and Milk	CFL I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	12/43	572	
Factory Fire Guard	CFL I O	G.B.S.S.	—	F. Cadman	—	6/43	1,373	
Fire Guard Plan	CFL I O	Verity	S. Box	L. Birt	—	10/43	2,847	
Fires Were Started	T O	Crown	I. Dalrymple	H. Jennings	4/43	—	6,027	
First Aid On The Spot	CFL I O	G.B.S.S.	—	F. Searle	—	10/43	1,504	
Floating Men	OOO	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	—	700	Arabic educational film. Despatched 9 43
Garden Friends and Foes	CFL I	G.B.I.	—	D. Catling	—	6/43	954	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Good Health in Scotland	CFL NT	Scottish Films	—	S. Russell	—	12/43	1,709	
Hello, West Indies	CFL OOO	P. Rotha Prods.	D. Alexander	J. Page	—	—	2,139	Despatched 10/43. See also- "West Indies Calling"
Highland Doctor	CFL NT O	P. Rotha Prods.	(P. Rotha)	Kay Mander	—	12/43	1,927	
In Which We Live	CFL NT O	Publ. Rel. Films	L. G. Wallace	R. Massingham	—	11/43	1,155	
Invincible?	15-M O	Movietone	—	—	1/43	—	1,245	Compilation made with the co-operation of the U.S. Signal Corps.
It's Just The Way It Is	15-M S W	Two Cities	—	L. Fenton	6/43	—	946	
King and His People, The	OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	977	Compilation. Despatched 4/43
Lifting	CFL I	C.W.S.	—	G. Wynn	—	12/43	1,790	
Making Good Hay	CFL I O	Realist	—	M. Thomson	—	11/43	839	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Making Grass Silage	CFL I O	Realist	—	M. Thomson	—	11/43	923	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Malta Convoy	CFL NT OO	Movietone	—	—	—	6/43	1,117	Compilation. Despatched
Manpower	CFL NT	Strand	A. Shaw	—	—	1/44	751	
Maltese Land Girl	OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	779	Despatched 11/43
Mechanical Vultures	OOO	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	—	642	Arabic Educational Film. Despatched 9/43
Men From The Sea	CFL 15-M	Spectator	—	G. Gunn	8/43	12/43	1,389	
Middle East Cartoon No. 1	OOO	Halas-Batchelor	—	—	—	—	819	Despatched 4/43
No. 2							730	Despatched 9/43
Milk Production In Britain	OOO	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	—	1,718	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey. Despatched 6/43
Motive Power	OOO	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	—	674	Arabic Educational Film. Despatched 7/43
Moving Forts	OOO	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	—	433	Arabic Educational film. Despatched 7/43
Nations Within A Nation	CFL OOO	Paramount	—	—	—	—	1,382	Despatched 11/43
Neuro-Psychiatry	CFL I OO	Spectator	B. Wright	M. Hankinson	—	6/43	6,155	
New Zealand's Home Front	OOO	Films of G.B.	—	—	—	—	997	Re-edited from various New Zealand films. Despatched 9/43
Of One Blood	CFL NT O	Seven League	—	H. Nieter	—	11/43	1,348	Assoc. Producer: Paul Rotha
Order of Lenin	OOO	Spectator	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	—	864	Despatched 6/43
Oven Bottling	CFL I	Pathe	—	—	—	12/43	444	
Pots and Pans	CFL I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	11/43	1,039	
Power for the Highlands	CFL 15-M	P. Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	J. Chambers	12/43	3/44	1,398	
Radio in Battle	CFL NT O	Shell	E. Anstey	Napier Bell	—	6/43	1,021	

TITLE	ABBREVIATIONS	PROD. UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES T	RELEASE DATES NT	LENGTH	NOTES
Raid Report	OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	1,110	Diagrams by W. Larkins. Despatched 5/43
Red Army Day	OOO	Newsreel Assoc.	—	—	—	—	—	Clip for U.S.S.R. Despatched 8/43
Report from China	CFL NT OO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	792	Compilation. Despatched 7/43
Reseeding for Better Grass	CFL I O	Realist	—	M. Thomson	—	11/43	940	Assoc. Prodr.: E. Anstey
Ride With Uncle Joe, A	CFL NT O	Verity	M. Munden	K. Annikin	—	9/43	982	
Salute to the Red Army	OOO	Newsreel Assoc.	—	—	—	—	947	Edited by Spectator. Despatched 3/43.
Saving Your Own Seeds	CFL I O	Realist	—	M. Thomson	—	6/43	1,533	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Scabies	CFL I O	Spectator	M. Hankinson	R. Carruthers	—	6/43	3,202	A short version, titled "The Scabies Mite", of the microcinematographic sections has been prepared by Byron Pictures
Seeds and Science	CFL NT OO	Strand	D. Taylor	A. Osibston	—	10/43	1,126	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey. Despatched 7/43
Silent Village, The	T O	Crown	H. Jennings	H. Jennings	9/43	—	3,275	
Simple Fruit Pruning	CFL I O	Realist	—	R. Hunter	—	12/43	1,766	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
South Africa	CFL NT OO	Crown	—	—	—	1/44	1,240	Compilation
Sport	OOO	Strand	—	R. Bond	—	1/44	—	Clip for U.S.S.R. Despatched 10/43
Steel Dhows	OOO	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	—	604	Arabic Educational Film. Despatched 7/43
Stooking and Stacking	CFL NT O	Realist	R. Hunter	—	—	6/43	1,171	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Summer on the Farm	CFL NT O	Verity	—	R. Keene	—	5/43	1,077	Assoc. Procuder: E. Anstey
There's A Future In It	T O	Strand	L. Fenton	L. Fenton	1/44	—	3,144	
They Fight by Night	OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	927	Partly compilation. Despatched 12/43
These Are The Men	15-M O	Strand	D. Taylor	—	3/43	—	1,075	Compilation
Turkish Ambassador's Visit	OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	400	Despatched 8/43
(Turkish) Honoured Guests	OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	850	Despatched 5/43
Turkish Production Mission	OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	900	Despatched 5/43
Tyneside Story	NT 15-M O	Spectator	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	1/44	1,305	
Until The Morning	OOO	Spectator	—	—	—	—	1,145	Compilation: Despatched 11/43
Up Periscope	CFL	See "Close Quarters"						
Vegetable Harvest	OO	P. Rotha Prods.	(P. Rotha)	J. Page	—	—	806	Despatched 12/43. Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Vegetable Seed Growing	CFL I O	Strand	A. Shaw	P. Graham Scott	—	7/43	1,230	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Volunteer, The	T O	The Archers	M. Powell & E. Pressburger	—	—	10/43	4,012	With Ralph Richardson
War In The Pacific	CFL 15-M O	Shell	(E. Anstey)	(G. Tharp)	5/43	9/43	1,388	With diagrams by F. Rodker
War Review No. 1	NT	Movietone	—	—	—	5/43	900	Compilations
No. 2						7/43	900	
Wartime Shipment of Packed Petroleum (i) Handling and Stowage) (ii) Fire Precautions and Fire Fighting	CFL I O	Shell	F. Anstey	Napier Bell	—	9/43	1,800 1,701	
Welcome to Britain, A	OOO	Strand	(A. Elton)	(A. Asquith, B. Meredith)	—	—	5,201	Released 12/43 for showing to U.S. Troops. With Burgess Meredith, Bob Hope, Felix Aylmer, Beatrice Lillie and Carla Lehmann.
Welding Helps The Farmer	CFL I O	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	10/43	873	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
West Indies Calling	15-M O	P. Rotha Prods.	D. Alexander	J. Page	4/44	1/44	1,302	
Winter Work in the Garden	CFL I O	Realist	—	B. Pearl	—	10/43	930	Assoc. Prod.: E. Anstey
Women of Britain	OOO	Spectator	—	—	—	—	1,012	Compilation. Despatched 6/43
Worker and Warfront No. 5	CFL NT O		—	—	—	5/43	1,136	Items made by various units and assembled by P. Rotha Productions
No. 6					—	7/43	961	
No. 7					—	9/43	747	
No. 8					—	11/43	973	
No. 9					—	1/44	951	
Workers' Weekend	CFL 15-M O	Crown	J. Monck	R. Elton	10/43	11/43	1,265	
World of Plenty	CFL T O	P. Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	—	11/43	3/44	4,133	
Youth	OOO	Verity	—	—	—	—	—	Clip for U.S.S.R. Despatched 10/43

2. NEWSREEL TRAILERS

TITLE	PRODUCTION UNIT	DIRECTOR	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT	RELEASE DATE	NOTES
Guy Fawkes	Nettlefold	(H. Hughes)	M. of F. & P.	28th Jan.	Recruiting for Women's Services
Any Questions	N.S.S.	(Miss Davies)	Campaigns Div. M.O.I.	1st Feb.	
Planned Crops	Realist	(L. Lye)	M. of Agric. & Fish.	8th Feb.	With Ted Ray
Blackout Sense	Rotha		M. of W.T.	11th Feb.	
Blitz Pacts	Spectator		M. of H.S.	15th Feb.	
Nero	McDougall & MacKendrick	(McDougall & MacKendrick)	M. of F. & P.	25th Feb.	
Salvage Saves Shipping	Film Traders	(G. M. Hollering)	M. of Supply	3rd March	Cartoon by Strausfeld
Black Diamonds	Verity	(K. Anakin)	M. of F. & P.	15th March	
Pre-Blitz Precautions	Spectator		M. of H.S.	25th March	
Diphtheria III	Larkins & Co.	(W. Larkins)	M. of Health	29th March	
Don't Travel at Rush Hours	Rotha	(R. Loew)	M. of W.T.	1st April	
Peak Load	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	M. of F. & P.	8th April	Cartoon by Strausfeld
Bones	Strand	(A. Harper)	M. of Supply	15th April	
Garden Pests	G.B.I.	—	M. of A. & F.	6th May	
Shorter Trunks	Argyle British Productions	(J. Argyle)	G.P.O.	13th May	
BicycleMade For Two	Byron	(J. Raymond)	M. of Supply	20th May	With Harry Tate Junior
Harriet and the Matches	Nettlefold	(B. Peake)	Fire Offices Committee	10th June	Verses by E. C. Bentley. Spoken by Mr. Jetsam
Make Do and Mend Parties	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	Board of Trade	24th June	
Scottish National Savings	Byron	(J. Raymond)	Scot. Office	28th June	Scottish distribution only
Contraries	McDougall & MacKendrick	(McDougall & MacKendrick)	M. of Supply	1st July	Semi-animated cartoon
Compost Heaps	Halas Batchelor	—	M. of A. & F.	8th July	Commentary by C. H. Middleton
Random Harvest	Public Relationship Films	(R. Massingham)	Scot. Office	19th July	Scottish distribution only
Nightingales	Concanem	(D. de Marney)	Ministry of Labour	22nd July	Cameraman: Georges Perinal
Diphtheria IV	Larkins & Co.	(W. M. Larkins)	M. of Health	29th July	Cartoon
Model Sorter	Halas Batchelor	—	M. of Supply	5th Aug.	Commentary spoken by Cyril Ritchard
Anti-Personnel Bomb	Verity	(D. Birt)	M. of H.S.	16th Aug.	
Get the Coke Habit	Crown	—	M. of F. & P.	12th Aug.	
Censorship of Prisoners' Mail	Byron	(J. Raymond)	Postal & Telph. Censorship	19th August	
Brains Trust	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	M. of Home Security	26th Aug.	With Stanley Holloway Douglas Young, Gavin Gordon, amd Edward Cooper
Here We Go Gathering Spuds	Spectator	—	Scottish Office	13th Sept.	Scottish distribution only
Paper Chase	Byron	(J. Raymond)	M. of Supply	16th Sept.	
How to Use Your Doctor	Strand	(P. Price)	M. of Health	23rd Sept.	
No Fire Without Smoke	Nettlefold	(B. Peake)	Fire Offices Committee	4th Oct.	
Blood Will Out	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	M. of Health	7th Oct.	
I Stopped, I Looked . . .	Halas Batchelor	—	Ministry of War Transport	14th Oct.	Animated Cartoon. Song by Michael Carr
Sternutation	Spectator	(M. Hankinson)	Ministry of Health	21st Oct.	
Scottish National Savings (2)	Gainsborough	(L. Arliss)	Scottish Savings Committee.	25th Oct.	With Will Fyffe. Scottish distribution only

NEWSREEL TRAILERS *(continued)*

TITLE	PRODUCTION UNIT	DIRECTOR	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT	RELEASE DATE	NOTES
Early Digging	Halas Batchelor	—	Ministry of A. & F.	28th Oct.	Animated Cartoon. Music by Arthur Young
Black Out Sense	Rotha	—	Min. War Transport	1st Nov.	Re-issue
Tell Me, Where is Fancy Bread?	Crown	(P. Bolton)	Min. of Food	4th Nov.	
Master Builders	Scottish Films	—	Dept. Educ. for Scotland	8th Nov.	Scottish Distribution
Matter of Interest, A	Nettlefold	(H. Hughes)	Nat. Savings Com. for Scot.	22nd Nov.	Scottish Distribution
Old Logs	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	Min. of Fuel	25th Nov.	
Skeleton in the Cupboard	Film Traders	(G. Hollering)	Min. of Supply	16th Dec.	
Sacred Flame, The	Spectator	(G. Gunn)	Min. of Fuel & Power	20th Dec.	
Firewatch Dog	Spectator	(G. Gunn)	Fire Officers Committee	23rd Dec.	

3. COLONIAL FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS

TITLE	LENGTH 16 mm.	DATE OF DESPATCH OVERSEAS	REMARKS
Charlie The Rascal	180 ft.	19/1/43	16 mm. Silent
Heroic Malta	385 ft.	19/1/43	16 mm. Silent
Farming in Russia	220 ft.	11/2/43	16 mm. Silent
Machi Gaba	411 ft.	11/2/43	16 mm. Silent
Mobile Library	372 ft.	11/12/43	16 mm. Silent
Katsina Tank	300 ft.	25/2/43	16 mm. Silent
Take Cover	1,152 ft.	31/3/43	35 mm. and 16 mm. Sound and Silent
Timbermen from Honduras	453 ft.	8/6/43	16 mm Silent
The British Empire at War No. 1	334 ft.	25/6/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 2	343 ft.	25/6/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 3	367 ft.	6/7/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 4	311 ft.	14/7/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 5	296 ft.	14/7/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 6	347 ft.	14/7/43	16 mm. Silent
Land and Water (1 reel)	395 ft.	14/7/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 7	352 ft.	14/7/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 8	365 ft.	20/8/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 9	378 ft.	20/8/43	16 mm. Silent
P/O Peter Thomas	378 ft.	20/8/43	16 mm. Silent
Colonial Centre	328 ft.	20/8/43	16 mm. Silent
Don't Neglect Your Bicycle	452 ft.	20/8/43	16 mm. Silent
Blind People	479 ft.	17/9/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 10	529 ft.	20/9/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 11	352 ft.	4/10/43	16 mm. Silent
We Want Rubber	507 ft.	6/10/43	16 mm. Silent
These are British Sailors (one reel)	377 ft.	22/11/43	16 mm. Silent
India (one reel)	340 ft.	22/11/43	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 12 (two reels)	702 ft.	22/11/43	16 mm. Silent
Nurse Ademola (one reel)	324 ft.	20/12/43	16 mm. Silent
Progress in The Colonies	350 ft.	1/44	Despatched per M.O.I. Normal channels.

4. STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF FILMS PRODUCED BY THE M.O.I.

FOOTAGE OF FILMS

	1940(a)	1941	1942	1943	TOTAL
5-Minute	13,791	25,113	20,141	—	59,045
15-Minute	—	—	1,316	15,216	16,532
General T. Distribution	16,673	9,228	22,506	33,833	82,240
General N.T. Distribution	23,545	7,890	41,457	24,010	96,902
Instructional and Training	4,109	10,280	30,522	38,568	83,479
Mainly Overseas	—	—	16,383	15,081	31,464
Wholly Overseas	3,100	11,093	22,944	43,155	80,292
Trailers	1,600(b)	3,000(b)	4,250(c)	5,750(c)	14,600
TOTAL	62,818	66,604	159,519	175,613	464,554
Colonial Film Unit Productions	11,919	7,836	13,600(d)	30,198(e)	65,553
Acquired 5 Minute and 15-Minute Films	1,135	6,657	11,353	1,312(f)	20,437

(a) Includes 3,130 feet of T. releases delivered in 1939.
(b) Average length—200 ft.
(c) Average length—125 ft.
(d) 16 mm. productions are calculated at equivalent 35 mm. footage.
(e) Includes 12 "Empire at War" compilations.
(f) 15-Minute film.

NUMBERS OF FILMS

	1940(a)	1941	1942	1943	TOTAL
5-Minute	20	37	29	—	86
15-Minute	—	—	1	12	13
General T. Distribution	14	5	7	8	34
General N.T. Distribution	23	7	35	21	86
Instructional and Training	6	12	24	27	69
Mainly Overseas	—	—	12	7	19
Wholly Overseas	3	10	18	39	70
Trailers	8	15	34	46	103
TOTAL	74	86	160	160	480
Colonial Film Unit Productions	8	10	16(b)	30(c)	64
Acquired 5-Minute and 15-Minute Films	2	10	17	1(d)	30

(a) Includes 2 films for T. release delivered in 1939.
(b) Includes 4 16.-mm. productions.
(c) Includes 12 "Empire at War" compilations.
(d) 15-Minute film.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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VOLUME 5 NUMBER 2 MONTHLY—ONE SHILLING

FILM OF THE MONTH

Tunisian Victory

Tunisian Victory. Produced by British and American Service Film Units. Distributed by M.O.I. and O.W.I. 78 minutes.

Subject: The planning and successful carrying out of the Tunisian campaign. The film is a direct sequel to *Desert Victory* (reviewed in D.N.L. March, 1943).

Treatment: The story of operation "Acrobat" is the story of a combined British-American-French operation planned beforehand down to the minutest detail, and of how, despite unforeseeable snags and reverses, it was carried to a successful conclusion with the debacle of Von Arnim's forces in the Cap Bon peninsula. Obviously the strategy and tactics of this operation are far more complicated to weld into film form than were those of the Libyan campaign, and the makers of *Tunisian Victory* are to be congratulated on the clarity with which they have presented the main features both of the landing operations and of the subsequent campaign. The use of the analogy of a cylinder to explain the final drive on Tunis and Bizerta is very ingenious, although it breaks down over the spark-plug idea, which is liable to force a strained interpretation on the spectator's mind.

The opening is magnificent—the two huge convoys, one American, the other British, converging on a specified point in the Atlantic. Well-conceived too, is the long flash-back which follows, showing as it does the Washington conferences of the summer of 1942, and the vastness of the preparations which had to be made before the plan could be put into operation. These preparations were not purely military, but involved the work of millions of men and women in mines, plants, factories and docks throughout Britain and the U.S. To them the film pays tribute as the people who made available the 10 tons of equipment for every soldier on the expedition, to say nothing of the 520 different kinds of ammunition. The rest of the film sticks to chronological order, with plenty of explanatory diagrams. No tribute can be too high for the British and American technicians—and there must have been many of them—who were responsible for the vast wealth of authentic visual material of the film, on land, at sea, and in the air. The cameras seem to have been everywhere, and there are some fantastic scenes of bombing, tank-busting, and open fighting (notably in the attack on Longstop Hill).

There are a few re-enactments, chiefly of night attacks. Material for the assault on Wadi Zig Zaou by the Eighth Army was shot in England, and the U.S. attack on Hill 609 was shot in Arizona. In both cases the re-enactments are well done and perfectly convincing.

Propaganda Value: First, it may be most willingly conceded that *Tunisian Victory* is first-class propaganda in that it shows the complete smashing of Nazi might by a concerted and efficient combination of the fighting and planning powers of three of the United Nations. Second, the film is notable as being the first film to start with a title saying: "The Governments of the United States and Great Britain present". This in itself is a good augury, and impels one to look forward to the day when one shall see a title saying, quite simply. "The United Nations present ——". (Incidentally was the working out of the method of co-operation between the two governments concerned, one of the factors determining the long delay before the film was complete? It would have been more timely and more valuable last Autumn and there can have been few, if any, technical obstacles to getting it out by then.)

But *Tunisian Victory* (very properly) tries to do more than achieve propaganda by direct reporting. It aims at keeping well in mind the faith, hope and determination of the common man as seen in the midst of the struggle, and also in relation to the building of a decent world after the war. Unfortunately one of the results of the collaboration between Major Hugh Stewart's Army Film Unit and Col. Frank Capra's U.S. Signal Corps Unit has been to cause the film to crash heavily between two stools. In addition to straight commentaries, two disembodied voices, representing Privates Joe Doakes and Thomas Atkins, have been introduced, and it is largely through their monologues or dialogues that the moral message of the film is conveyed. There would be nothing wrong with this if it were well done, but unfortunately the fell hand of Capra's Hollywood is much in evidence. In the first place, the two voices are only too recognisable as those of actors (Burgess Meredith and Bernard Miles, to be exact), and this is the first step in removing what they have to say from reality. If trained voices had to be used surely they should have been those of actors and commentators not so well-known; as it is, there is an absolutely inevitable clash with the vivid and uncompromising authenticity of the visuals.

But the manner of the commentary is perhaps less trying than the matter, particularly as regards the final sequence, in which Messrs. Atkins and Doakes are heard buying a joint weekend excursion ticket to Shangri La, apparently unaware that when they get back on Monday there will still be the washing-up to be done, just like there always is when you come out of a Capra movie. In other words, the moral of the film, which is obvious enough, is lost in a lot of sentimental and incredibly well-meaning vapourings. "Look" say Meredith and Miles to each other, in effect, "Look at all this smashed apparatus of war. Doesn't it seem a pity to make things only to smash them? Now that we've got together so successfully in this war why shouldn't we get together afterwards and make things which aren't meant to be smashed, like cars and ships and refrigerators? And get together to make everyone happy, and bring the smiles back to the children's faces again."

Impeccable sentiments, simply expressed, just like Capra always does. And, just like Capra, missing the real point, which is that you don't bring the smiles back to children's faces again merely by saying we ought to get together. The smiles have been burnt and blown and slashed and starved and pellagra-ed off millions of children's faces just because too many of us were for too long content with pious wishes and pious thoughts, too long complacent at past examples of united effort (e.g. 1914–18), too eager to believe that a blast from the trombone of sincerity would one day conveniently be sounded, not for Judgment Day, but for the prompt share-out of a heavenly slate-club.

No, the last sequence of *Tunisian Victory*, despite its sincere attempt to draw a moral, can only be written off as a perversion of all those desires and beliefs for which, in Tunisia,

Film of the Month
(*continued*)

35,000 British, 16,000 Americans, and 15,000 French laid down their lives.

And yet the moral is easy. Here is a very fine film which tells how the men and women of three great countries planned together on a vast scale and acted together on a vast scale; which shows how, in their common determination to win the fight *against* things they knew were evil, and *for* the right to build a better world, they planned and acted well—meeting the unexpected disaster and the delaying of high hopes, with unanimous bravery. The result was, they achieved what they had planned. They will do it again, just as others in Russia and China and the Pacific Islands are doing it again, but only if they continue to fight as well as plan.

Doakes and Atkins will not bring about the smiles of children unless they realise that getting together to do or make things is only half a beginning. What a pity *Tunisian Victory's* finale was not clinched by the statement of two simple facts: "Here is something fully planned, and achieved by concerted and total co-operative energy. Your brave new post-war world can only come about the same way. We have to plan together but by God we have to fight too—fight, not Nazis, but people who say 'wouldn't it be a fine thing if . . .?' instead of 'here is something worthwhile. We're going to do it'."

If you agree with what has just been said you may be one of those who is also puzzled—to put it mildly—about the three appearances of one Darlan in this film—first as ordering the surrender of Algiers, second as ordering cessation of hostilities after the Nazis took Southern France, and third—post facto and in a throw-away reference—as a corpse. And yet, in a longish sequence showing the Christmas festivities in Tunisia, there is no reference at all to the splendid Christmas present the world received on that day—the assassination of Darlan. Well, one must remember that politics are still politics and think hard about the Beveridge Plan, yes?

Much space has been devoted to some propaganda implications of *Tunisian Victory* simply because the film does try to do something, and the mistakes made in it may point the way to what should or should not be done in the future. But let us reiterate that, with the reservations stated, *Tunisian Victory* is a good honest job of reporting on a good honest job of fighting. As such, it deserves an enthusiastic hand.

New Documentary Films
(*continued from page* 16)

link, between it and the airmen fighters above, not so hard to find. In the village cemetery are crosses, bearing inscriptions strange to English eyes—the names of Polish airmen.

In this cemetery the funeral of General Sikorsky takes place. A well photographed sequence, this captures the atmosphere of such a ceremony more effectively than many elaborate studio productions.

We see Sikorsky's life as recorded by newsreels, how he rallied his countrymen, after the defeat of Poland, in France—after the fall of France, in Britain. The Polish airmen who fight beside the R.A.F. protecting English towns and villages, and Polish soldiers and sailors, fought well behind this soldier, who in earlier days had been little esteemed in his country. Head of the Government, Sikorsky is shown as one who made attempts to set Polish international policy on a sound level. To-day it comes almost as a surprise, though a welcome one, to see him with Molotov, concluding a pact with U.S.S.R.

In technical quality the film is excellent. Its shape holds interest in what might at first seem past history.

Propaganda Value: The biography of a nation's leading statesman—his death so fresh to mind, that a biography is near to being an obituary—is a hard subject for a film. The introduction, showing Polish airmen over the English scene, reminds us that Polish affairs are close to life in Britain. The film might have done even better here, had it pictured more of the "live" quality of people in the village—the emphasis is more on pictorial appeal.

As far as British audiences are concerned, the propaganda value of the film can be no more than that of the subject. That is to say, the life of Sikorsky, as a political fact, defines and limits the scope of the positive statements or appeals which the film can make.

Above all, this film emphasies that propaganda cannot work in a political vacuum. No film, however well made, can convincingly present a policy more enlightened than that of the Government which sponsors it—at all events, not to nationals of other countries.

The constructive work, which the film shows Sikorsky to have done, may be an encouragement to his countrymen to go farther on the journey he started.

What Future for Film Societies?

by H. Forsyth Hardy

FILM societies which have survived through the fifth winter of the war are faced with a major problem as they look forward to season 1944–45. By now the reserve of Continental feature films in this country at the outbreak of war has disappeared as the result of annual inroads and meagre replenishment. What are the societies to do: revive old films or lower programme standards to accommodate films formerly rejected?

I do not think either course offers an adequate solution if film societies are to continue to justify their existence in the film scheme of things. Unless a film society is an advance guard; unless its programmes are making a real contribution to the study of the film; unless its activities generally are helping to further the development of the film medium, it is not doing its job. I doubt whether these requirements can be met by dusting off the films of yesteryear and complacently putting them into the programmes again.

In too many cases the composition of a film society programme has become something automatic. The recipe runs something like this: take the best available French or Russian film, add a couple of documentaries, and put in a Disney cartoon if the other items tend to be heavy. When there was an ample supply of important new feature films, each of which was in itself sufficient *raison d'être* for a programme, there was not much wrong with this policy, though it always was lacking in imagination. Now, when the films are old or second-rate, it is clearly not enough.

I would like to see film societies accept the present admittedly difficult situation as a challenge. The easy course is dangerously easy and can lead to the discrediting of the whole movement. Already some programmes seem to offer little more than Sunday afternoon escapism. With patience and resource it is possible to compile programmes which are something more than a fortuitous assembly of a feature and a few shorts.

In this first article, and at a period in the season when most film societies have completed their bookings, I do not propose to discuss suggestions in detail. I would like to give one or two examples, however, of the kind of thing I have in mind.

When *The Blue Angel* recently became available through the National Film Library, the Edinburgh Film Guild considered how a programme in which it formed the feature could be increased in interest and significance. Could the programme become something more than a revival of a memorable German film of 1931, with one or two assorted shorts? Could it be built up to reflect the state of cinema twelve or thirteen years ago? A beginning was made with Basil Wright's *O'er Hill and Dale* (1932), one of the notable group of documentaries produced by John Grierson at the E.M.B., and a typical film of a formative period in British cinema. To it was added Jean Epstein's *Mor Vran* (1931), representative of the distinctive work of the French realist film-makers. Disney, leader of the early experimentalists in the sound film, was represented by

What Future for Film Societies?

(*continued*)

his first sound cartoon, *Steamboat Willie* (1928), and his first Silly Symphony, *Skeleton Dance* (1929)—both extracted from *Drawings that Walk and Talk*. To help to establish the flavour of the period, a 1931 issue of British Movietonews, with sequences on Amy Johnson's arrival in Japan and Kay Don's in America, was added. These, with *The Blue Angel*, regarded at the time as an outstanding example of the imaginative use of sound for dramatic and not merely realistic purposes, comprised a programme which made it possible for the audience to step back some twelve years in time and compare critically the achievements of 1931 with that of to-day.

To take another example, I should like to see a programme describing "Documentary Since the War", or "From *The First Days* to *Tunisian Victory*". So much has been crowded into the last four and a half years that we tend to forget the astonishing development of documentary during the period. In August, 1939, we were still discussing the significance of Harry Watt's *North Sea*, with its evidence of a new humanist approach, as we called it. In the intervening period we have seen the documentary accept that style as commonplace and go on to experiment wtih a fluid technique, best illustrated in *World of Plenty*. It would be instructive—and, I think, fascinating—to have a programme illuminating that development and including perhaps *The First Days*, *Squadron* 992, *Britain Can Take It*, *The Harvest Shall Come*, *The Silent Village*, *Workers' Week-end*, and *Tunisian Victory*.

Given enterprise, and co-operation on the part of the National and Central Film Libraries and other sources, there is no limit to the variety of programmes which may be arranged to further film society aims. I hope to discuss some further suggestions in later articles.

Documentary Films

(*continued*)

The Grassy Shires. *Director:* Ralph Keene. *Camera:* Peter Hennessey. *Music:* William Alwyn. *Production:* Edgar Anstey. Green Park Productions, M.O.I. Non-T. 14 mins.

Subject: Warwickshire, Leicestershire, Rutlandshire, Northamptonshire. Part of the series of films surveying Britain.

Treatment: The counties are grouped together as having a common type of agriculture and Leicestershire is taken as the example. The film is a straightforward, pictorially good looking, survey of this section of England with its cattle and milk markets. Ley farming is shown as being introduced because of the war but it does not alter the shires' essentially dairy-farming characteristics. The commentary is carefully worded to apply to peace as well as war, and broken up among different speakers. This treatment loses something in lucidity but certainly makes for variety of interest and helps move the cows along.

Technical note: Somebody one day has got to make up his mind about sound effects on commentary films. Probably everything should make noise or all be quiet. There are one or two random moos in the film which disturb rather than help.

FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of films are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H: A hire charge is made. F: Free distribution. Sd: Sound. St: Silent.

Association of Scientific Workers, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films*. A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request. Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

Austin Film Library. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Australian Trade Publicity Film Library. 18 films of Australian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F. 3 sound films on 9.5 mm. available from *Pathescope*.

British Commercial Gas Association, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & few St. F.

British Council Film Department, 3 Hanover Street, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1941. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses for 100 sound and silent documentary films.

British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. (*a*) *National Film Library Loan Section* to stimulate film appreciation by making available copies of film classics. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (*b*) *Collection of Educational Films*. The Institute has a small collection of educational films not available from other sources. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

British Instructional Films, 111 Wardour Street, W.1. Feature films; Pathé Gazettes and Pathetones; a good collection of nature films. Catalogue available. 16 mm. Sd. & H.

Canadian-Pacific Film Library. 15 films of Canadian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Canadian Government Exhibitions and Publicity. A wide variety of films. Available from the *Empire Film Library*.

Central Council for Health Education. Catalogue of some 250 films, mostly of a specialist health nature, dealing with Diphtheria, Housing, Maternity, Child Welfare, Personal Hygiene, Prevention of Diseases, Physical Fitness, etc. Most films produced by societies affiliated to the Council, or on loan from other 16 mm. distributors (e.g. B.C.G.A.). Six films produced direct for the Council also available, including *Fear and Peter Brown*, *Carry on Children*, and *Breath of Danger*.
35 mm. and 16 mm. Sd. and St. H. and F.

Central Film Library, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Has absorbed the *Empire Film Library* and the *G.P.O. Film Library*. Also contains all new M.O.I. non-theatrical films. Catalogues available. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Children's Committee of the National Council for British-Soviet Unity, 10 Abbey House, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1. Soviet Sound Films suitable for children. 16 mm. Sd. F. for shows during school hours. H. for other occasions.

Coal Utilisation Joint Council, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Crookes' Laboratories, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Dartington Hall Film Unit. Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

Dominion of New Zealand Film Library. 415 Strand, W.C.2. 22 films of industry, scenery and sport. Includes several films about the Maoris. 16 mm. St. F.

Educational Films Bureau, Tring, Herts. A selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Education General Services, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

Electrical Development Association, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available to members of the Association only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Empire Film Library. Films primarily of Empire interest, with a useful subject index. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 16 mm. and a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Ford Film Library, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Gaumont-British Equipments, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

G.P.O. Film Library. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Kodak Ltd., Kingsway, W.C.2. Medical Film Library. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

March of Time, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Britain's R.A.F.*, *India in Crisis*, *G-Men at War*, *Inside Fascist Spain*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

Mathematical Films. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5. mm. St. H.

Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd., Trafford Park, Manchester, 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing to technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

Pathescope, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Petroleum Films Bureau, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Some 25 technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Religious Film Library, Church Walk, Dunstable, Beds. Films of religious and temperance appeal. Also list of supporting films from other sources. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Scottish Central Film Library, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Sound-Film Services, 27 Charles Street, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work*. *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

South African Railways Publicity and Travel Bureau, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 10 films of travel and general interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & 4 St. versions. F.

Southern Railway, General Manager's Office, Waterloo Station, S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South Africa Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

Wallace Heaton, Ltd., 127 New Bond Street, W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts, 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Workers' Film Association, Ltd., Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

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DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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A NATIONAL NEED

It appears more than probable that the Ministry of Information is due for abolition as soon as the fighting is over; indeed, Brendan Bracken himself is apparently in favour of this action. The M.O.I. is, of course, a war baby (of Gargantuan size), and many reasonable arguments can be advanced for its removal when the crisis is over. It is undoubtedly far too big; and some of its branches (notably that of censorship) have no place in the post-war period. But on the other hand it is providing in wartime a number of services whose value to the nation in peacetime would be of the most positive nature, and many people are beginning to fear that these too may be jettisoned, on grounds of "economy", if the M.O.I. itself vanishes and leaves them homeless.

This fear is all the more understandable if we consider how difficult it still is for the M.O.I. to get rid of the smell which surrounded its disastrous inception during 1939 to 1940. A glance through the back files of D.N.L. will suffice to indicate the lamentable mistakes (if indeed they were no more than mistakes) which brought it into disrepute. But the same glance will also show, quite clearly, the progress which has since been made. D.N.L. has never hesitated at any time to criticise the M.O.I. when criticism seemed necessary; and we believe much of our criticism has been useful and constructive. But one thing is clear. To begin with, criticism could only be directed at the M.O.I.'s failure to do anything at all. Later, criticism fell on its doing things the wrong way. But finally and recently, the criticisms have been aimed only at what seemed to be errors or mishandlings of schemes and plans which are essentially good and practical. The M.O.I. today is no more and no less open to criticism than any other Government department, and it will be well to remember this point during the next seven or eight months.

We make no plea for the retention of the M.O.I. as it now stands and in its present unwieldy size. What is essential, however, is that certain of its services—films, publications and home intelligence to name three of them—should not only be retained but carefully fostered and developed during the years following the war.

As far as films are concerned, the M.O.I. has provided the nation with one of the finest pieces of educational apparatus imaginable. The Central Film Library and the 150 odd non-theatrical circuits have become an important factor in our national life. The films shown in this way to over 20 million people a year are giving information and instruction, arousing new interests, stimulating discussion and in general acting as a creative factor in helping to produce those close relationships between the people and their Government which are the essentials of democracy. It is, incidentally, a great pity that the Films Division's non-theatrical work has not been publicised in more detail and more widely than hitherto, and we hope shortly to publish a full estimate of its value to various groups of the community. Meanwhile we content ourselves by asking (quite apart from informational matters) whether there is any department in any other government which has vigorously and widely circulated such forthright films as *World of Plenty*, *Words and Actions*, and *The Harvest Shall Come* to a vast audience cross-sectioning the whole of the community.

In addition to its non-theatrical service, the M.O.I. Films Division has done much for British feature film prestige, both here and overseas, through the full-scale documentaries of the Crown Film Unit (the influence of whose work on studio production is already marked). It has also, though perhaps more slowly, built up a good circulation of good films (British Council please note) in overseas countries, including the Dominions and Colonies, but most notably in the U.S.A. It has, too, effected a close and useful liaison with Russia, the fruits of which are now maturing. Remember too that the Films Division acts as the film making and distributing agency for all Government departments (other than the Services) and that this principle of operation makes for full co-ordination and avoids muddle and overlap.

It is essential that the National Film Service established by the M.O.I. shall be retained and further developed. And as films in this reference can no longer be regarded separately from other media, it is clear that these further developments must be in close relationship to publications, home intelligence, etc. The issuing of handbooks, pamphlets, posters, diagrams, wall newspapers and so on should be intimately tied in with non-theatrical film release. The relationship between films and exhibitions (both the permanent and, more importantly, the travelling type) needs no proof at this late stage.

By the same token there is a strong case for the retention of the Crown Film Unit and the necessary studio facilities which it entails. The time is long past when the old cries of bureaucracy or totalitarianism could be raised against the principle of a Government film unit and studios. Government is now in the film business; both past records and future possibilities make it sensible, to say the least, for it to stay there.

This need is nowhere more strongly indicated than in the field of education. The use of films, both for child and adult education, is now being closely considered by the Board of Education—and the considerations are not as to whether to use films, but as to how they can

(*continued overleaf*)

We Need National Information Board

(continued)

best be used. The vast field of film education is not one which the nation can afford to leave to the vagaries and uncertainties of commercial exploitation, misdirected effort, and private profit. The say must be with the people through their Government.

It is time for all those who believe in the film as a social force to realise that there is a grave danger of all the work and progress so far achieved receiving, at best, a severe setback and, at worst, a mortal blow, if combined operations are not put in hand to ensure that the services of public information we have acquired during the past five years shall be retained.

It is not necessarily (or even sensibly) a matter of retaining the present somewhat unwieldy M.O.I.; it is a matter of seeing that the vital services now within the M.O.I. are not cancelled, or split up, or scattered to the four winds by being parcelled out to various Government departments.

Not for the first time in these columns we stress the need for a National Information Board—a creative body representative of all branches of information, education and public morale. It would in effect consist of the M.O.I. services outside the accretions of censorship and other wartime clobber. It would deal in terms of films, radio, television, posters, printed and illustrated matter, exhibitions, discussion groups and brains trusts, wall-newspapers, and any other media which enable the people of a democracy not merely to draw closer to each other for free discussion and for co-operative action arising from discussion, but also to present a true picture of themselves and their aspirations to the rest of the world.

The Overseas Aspect

Not least important is the overseas aspect, and particularly so in relation to the Commonwealth. In the Dominions for instance the nuclei of such information services exist; and in Canada these services have, partly on experience gained by workers in England during the 'thirties, been developed to an extent fully equalling and in some respects surpassing our own. Moreover, the value of such an Information Board in relation to international bodies would be enormous. Already we have the I.L.O. in action again; we have the urgencies represented by UNRRA, which may prove the first form of a permanent world secretariat of supply; we have UNIO; and so on. If we in Britain are to play our part in these world wide activities an Information Board such as we suggest is essential. Without it, we should be left to the tender mercies of the Foreign Office and the British Council.

It is perhaps too early to lay down the exact constitutional form in which we should co-ordinate our educational and informational services. The Information Board we propose could be set up in various different ways. But whatever constitution is chosen, there are certain factors which must be regarded as *sine qua non*. The first of these is the maximum possible freedom from the trammels of routine civil service administration. The second is that the proposed organisation should not be an appendage of any existing Government department (not even the Board of Education). The third is that the public interest should be freely and fully represented on the board, and that the board should be answerable for its actions in parliament through a Cabinet Minister who would be a member of it. And finally, the functions envisaged must not be sidetracked into mere co-ordination of effort (important though this would be), but must be initiatory and creative.

The essential thing, here and now, is to see that our information services do not go by default in the post-war period. We urge all people of goodwill to see, through proper machinery of democracy, that the nation retains and gets what it needs.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

The Purchase of E.R.P.I.

AN EVENT of major importance which has recently taken place in the United States has received surprisingly little publicity in this country. We refer to the purchase of E.R.P.I. (Electrical Research Products Inc.) Film Library by Encyclopædia Britannica. A subsidiary of the West Electric Co., it was one of the largest and most important producers of classroom films (and some others of a direct educational nature) anywhere in the world. The terms under which it has changed hands are therefore very important. This is the situation, roughly speaking. The Encyclopædia Britannica belongs to the University of Chicago, one of the more notable and important universities of the North American continent. Superficially, therefore, E.R.P.I. is passing into suitable academic hands. What has now happened, however, is that E.R.P.I. has become "Encyclopædia Britannica Films Inc". The Chairman of the Board of this new body is the Vice-President of Chicago University and the Board itself includes the President of Chicago University and two United States Government officials (the O.P.A. administrator and the Under-Secretary of Commerce). Amongst the others we find the President of Dartmouth College, the president of Encyclopædia Britannica, the president of the Book of the Month Club, the chairman of the Quaker Company, a representative of the noted publishers Simon & Schuster, and the president of the Studebaker Company. To this list must be added Mr. Marshall Field, who is probably one of the richest men in the world and an important newspaper publisher; and Mr. Henry Luce, of *Time*, *Life* and *Fortune*. It will be noted that Mr. Luce's organisation also controls the film series *March of Time*. It is now said that the Eastman Kodak educational library is also being acquired by this group. The general picture, therefore, is of a great centralisation of visual media of education, which is not necessarily a bad thing. The presence of names such as those of Luce and Marshall Field, with their remarkable control of important printed periodicals, suggests that a move may be in progress by what we may describe as the right wing progressives for a considerable control over a major educational field. On the Board also are some prominent industrialists whose presence reminds us of the conception of America as a great trading country and of such phrases as "The American Century"; nevertheless it would be going much too far to suggest that this new move in the visual educational field is in any way consciously devoted to "selling America", or to any other forms of similar propaganda. All those concerned in the future of documentary film, particularly on an international basis, will be interested in the future development of this big new project, which represents on the one hand the academic attitude and on the other hand those wider fields of public education and information which are linked with popular media such as the press, radio, films and so on. In this connection we note that Mr. Luce recently bought a block of shares in the Blue Network, one of the major American radio companies. Nor would it surprise us to learn in the not too distant future that some arrangement had been come to with Walt Disney Films to include their educational work in the whole set-up of which Encyclopædia Britannica Films Inc. is the corner-stone. Meantime, we note with interest and satisfaction that John Grierson has now joined the Board of Encyclopædia Britannica Films Inc.

A Good Laugh

Without in any way wishing to detract from a film which we have not yet seen and, for all we know, may be extremely good, we quote below the opening of a two-and-a-half page publicity hand-out circulated by Two Cities Films Ltd. Here it is:

"Much has been said and written about the possibilities of the Documentary film, a vast source of entertainment and instruction as yet barely tapped. True, the war has given us several outstanding Documentaries, conceived and made by experienced directors and

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GRIERSON AND THE I.L.O.

JOHN GRIERSON has reported how an American journalist, Miss Ernestine Evans, first suggested to him a pre-war plan for the enlightened use of the film medium by the International Labour Office. Her thesis was as follows. If England represents the highest standard of safety in mines, let an appropriate film record be made for all the mining nations to see and let it pass out to the world through the agency of the I.L.O. If Sweden has the best system of hospital service, or New Zealand the highest standard of pre-natal care, or France the best service of medical information to farmers, let the record of them go out to all the other countries for their consideration and benefit. Use the I.L.O. as a world centre. Let it encourage the various countries to produce those film records which by their example would best contribute to the common cause.

Largely as a result of Miss Evans's suggestion, Grierson and Basil Wright, on the I.L.O.'s request worked out at Film Centre a scheme which they took to Geneva in 1938. But the sands of peace were running out and war came before anything concrete could materialise. In 1944 the opportunity presents itself once more. On April 26th of this year Grierson, now Canadian Government Film Commissioner, again stated his case, this time against a horizon of approaching peace. He had been invited to address the I.L.O. conference at Philadelphia and he reminded the assembled body that the I.L.O. and any similar international bodies which might grow from the war would be faced with an educational task which must be conceived in new terms. He began by stating them.

"The I.L.O. is concerned with working standards and working relationships and we have all been learning over the years how wide and deep this interest goes. The war period, especially, has provided a revelation of how the quantitative achievements of industry are completely dependent on the conditions under which industry is carried on, how war efforts of every kind involve close consideration of the social structure which supports them. The war period has, not least, brought a revelation of this relationship to the people concerned with war information and industrial morale.

"Not all of them, I am sorry to say, have appreciated the humanistic terms under which the work of men's hands is secured. In spite of the experience of the I.L.O. over the years, the worst mistakes were made from the beginning. First we had the 'patriotism is enough' period—the 'my country right or wrong period'. To integrate the workers' front with the soldiers' front, we thought it sufficient to call up the sacred images of the tribe and the nation. The flags flew, the bands blared. The lights of common sense were dimmed; spotlit, our national banners fluttered in an artificial breeze. Then we had the 'black and white' period. We built up the Nazis as the children of darkness and ourselves as the children of light. We asserted our way of life as the best in the best of all possible worlds. Forgetting the dark thirties, we assumed an affectionate and even fervent belief in the *status quo*. Then we had the 'finger of scorn' period when we bullied the workers from factory platforms, telling them how they were killing soldiers and sinking ships and letting down the war effort if they so much as cast a critical eye over wages and working conditions in time of war.

"We had to come sooner or late to a more realistic conception of our information to industry. We discovered that absenteeism might have a great deal to do with local transport conditions or local health conditions or local housing conditions. We discovered that the employment of women involved a consideration of crèches and communal kitchens, and even a consideration of the opening hours of beauty parlours. We discovered that there was a basis in reason—local reason—yes, even for the attitudes and actions of the people. With any true sense of democracy we should have known it from the beginning.

"That was not all. We discovered that the co-operation of the workers in any effort, national or otherwise, is dependent on the amenities which surround not only their lives inside the factory but their lives outside it. We discovered that the degree of their participation depends on the degree to which, as free men, they are allowed to participate in the understanding, direction and management of their own work and their own destiny. We discovered, finally, that all the patriotic ballyhoo, all the generalisations about black and white, all the exhortations, abuses and threats are not so important or so basic as a credible pledge, implemented in action, that the war is for the sake of the common people everywhere, and nothing if not that. . . .

"The ends men seek are identical and simple and concrete, whether they come black, white or yellow. They concern food and health and housing and the other highly visible evidences of the good life. I have no doubt that when these are fought for and secured, the invisible aspects of the good life—whatever these may be—will come to inhabit the edifice we have built. In the meantime, it is in the fulfilment of actual and visible human needs that we shall find the basis of a common philosophy and, if I may say so, the only one which the peoples of the world will any longer trust. In this progressive struggle for welfare which is actual, we all need the example of other countries, the example of other peoples' genius, other peoples' ingenuity and other peoples' good fortune. This example of others is a weapon in our hands, wherever we may be, with which to intensify the educational effort in our own domain. . . .

"There is an internationale of interest in medicine and town planning and agricultural research, and in each of the thousand and one specialised fields of human effort. From this point of view there is no such thing as a general public, nationally or internationally. There are thousands of publics, all trying to do something about something. The only time they all get together and become general is when they get tired of doing things, and lazy and lackadaisical and want to get off the earth. The trouble is that we have organised the people brilliantly in their moods of relaxation. We have organised them in the movies and the dope sheets of the sensational press and the dance halls of the nations. But we have not, with anything like the same intensity or deliberation, organised the people in their moods of resolution. We have not, with anything like the same adequacy, sufficiently fed them in the terms of their constructive and creative interests. . . .

"The source of vital education to-day is no longer the formal educational system. It resides rather in functional international organisations like U.N.R.R.A. and the I.L.O., and in functional national organisations which are actively concerned in developing the welfare of the people. I doubt if the people any longer put their hope in formal education, and for the good reason that it is not associated with their actual needs. There are brave exceptions, I know; but, by and large, it has been so anxious to avoid political difficulty that it has steered education away from those needs which produce political expression and therefore produce political difficulty. It has come to teach the technique of understanding but not the substance of it. It gives technical skills but not the sense of a living and organic social participation."

Grierson promised that there was no one concerned with documentary films or with film education in the various countries in the world who would not willingly stir his country into participation in a great new international educational effort. We here in Britain reiterate the pledge on our own behalf, and we await the appearance of allies in official quarters.

NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

The New Crop. Green Park Unit of Verity Films. *Direction:* Ken Annakin. *Camera:* Geoffry Williams. *Associate Producer:* E. Anstey. M.O.I. 20 minutes. Non-T.

Subject: The afforestation of Britain.

Treatment: This film follows the usual line: trees—the demand for timber caused by the war —science stepping in—the future of timber in Britain. All very neat and nice. Beautifully photographed, slickly directed, nothing omitted, except perhaps clear thinking. Even the commentator seemed to get a little tired of his rigmarole towards the end of the second reel. Perhaps the formula is getting a little stale through over use, or perhaps to-day's audiences deserve something tougher. The conclusions drawn towards the end are just a little too Utopian for the amount of information given in the earlier part of the film. Soft-wood growing seems certainly to be a get-rich-quick procedure, but while covering vast tracks of Britain with pine and spruce may be a road to prosperity, it will surely bring with it fresh problems. Somehow the case is too glib, the solution too easy; one is almost forced to suspect a snag, rather as in those shiny American magazines whose advertisements promise you the millenium if you travel by a certain railroad. One knows that the iced water tap wouldn't always work and the panoramic windows be often obscured by plebeian dirt.

The case for State Control of forests is well put, but here again the film fails by taking the whole thing too smoothly and making it sound too easy. Whichever way you look at it there is something slightly sinister about a pine or spruce plantation and in a strange way this is reflected in this film. There is something wrong somewhere and without knowing more about the whole subject it is difficult to know what it is, but it is there just the same.

Propaganda Value: Good informational stuff, beautiful to look at, but as has been said above, a bit too easy for audiences, who can stand something less predigested.

Cotswold Club. Strand Films. *Direction:* Charles de Lautour. *Camera:* Cyril Arapoff. *Associate Producers:* E. Anstey and D. Taylor. M.O.I. Non-T. 12 mins.

Subject: The work of the Village Garden Produce Association.

Treatment: A retired bank official has gone to live in a village and he finds it difficult to get to know people. He tells his story in the first person, and as proof of the fact that he finds it difficult to mix with the villagers, we see a long shot of a church after the Sunday morning service, with all the congregation walking one way and he and his wife walking sadly away in the opposite direction among the tombstones.

He goes on to tell us that there was not enough food to feed one of the neighbour's pigs and how the schoolmistress wrote to the Ministry of Agriculture who sent down a fellow to organise a Garden Produce Association in the village. Thus the banker got to know everybody, the pig was fed, the villagers increased their production of vegetables and also learnt how to market them.

The deliberately naïve approach to the subject somehow does not quite succeed in its purpose. One never quite believes in the village and its people, although it is nicely shot and the people themselves come across quite well. Perhaps this is because the film has an air of playing down to its audience, and the subject is treated very much from the outside.

Propaganda Value: Should be useful for showing in villages that have not heard of this particular scheme of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Children of the City. *Direction:* Budge Cooper. *Camera:* V. Suschitsky. *Production:* Paul Rotha. M.O.I. for Scottish Education Department, Scottish Home Dept. 30 mins.

Subject: Child delinquency. In Scotland in this instance but, fundamentally, the problem this film states could be anywhere.

Treatment: In the spate of short films now being made, few are memorable. Perhaps through overuse of a formula, or lack of real, honest feeling on the part of a director, or through official wet blanketing, most do their job and are soon forgotten; some are not remembered long enough to be even forgotten.

Children of the City comes as a healthy shock, a reminder of the power of the documentary film. Absorbingly interesting, telling its story in terms of people, of real live people and not lay figures, it yet makes its points as clearly as though it had been made of diagrams. And when it is finished it leaves the mind not dazed or doped but working fast.

The film tells the story of Alec, Duncan and Robbie, three boys in Edinburgh who break into a pawnbroker's for a lark and find themselves taking money from the till when the police come in. An escapade has become a crime. (How Jean Vigo would have liked this sequence with the small boy in the old-fashioned picture hat posturing in front of the mirror!) The day arrives for their appearance before the Juvenile Court, and as they and their parents meet to go together to the Court, we see something of their backgrounds. Alec, the ringleader, from a slum room, with a father whose dark history of pre-war unemployment has demoralised the large family. Duncan, whose father is away at war, from the home where his mother struggles overhard to keep things nice. Robbie, who has a squint, from a good working-class home. These are the three boys, Alec, dark and lowering; Duncan, fair and defiant, and Robbie, the youngest, puzzled but undismayed. Their mothers typify their home lives; Alec's mother is feckless and worn out; Duncan's is nervy and bottled up, and Robbie's is matter-of-fact and unimaginative.

The Juvenile Court in Edinburgh, which seems a fairly sensibly run place, takes each case in relation to the child and his background of school and home. The verdicts are given. Robbie is aged ten. Perhaps his squint is at the bottom of his troubles. His case is to be held open while he attends a Child Guidance Clinic. Duncan, aged 13, who has a good intelligence record but a bad school attendance, is to be visited at regular intervals by the probation officer. Alec, aged 13½ is another matter; he has been in the Court before and is the ringleader of the younger ones. His home life gives him no help, so he is sent for a course of disciplining at an approved school. A benevolent eye will be kept on all three of them for the next year or so. Perhaps it sounds a bit grim in print but it comes to life all right on the screen and appears a reasonable *ad hoc* solution of the problem, under existing conditions.

We see Robbie at the Child Welfare Centre starting his treatment, we see the probation officer calling on a reluctant Duncan, and we see Alec busy at the approved school. That is the end of their story in so far as it concerns the film. The practical side of the matter has been looked after as well as possible. But these boys are only three of a whole generation which often nears the borderline between play and crime, a state of affairs accentuated by the conditions of war. Now the camera, moving over overcrowded playgrounds, over gangs of children playing in mean streets, poses the real problem. Children get up to mischief because there is no proper outlet for the bursting, surging, creative energy within them. Schools are only open for a certain number of hours per day and a certain number of days per week. It is these free hours, playing a large and important part in a child's life, which make the problem.

The film suggests there ought to be play centres, organised activities of all kinds, scope for unorganised activities, too. (During this sequence the film takes a swift skate across the thin ice of fascism when it refers, pictorially, to the A.T.C. and other pre-Service organisations). Thus we have a human problem related to a general one and a suggested and admittedly only partial solution. This is one of the strengths of the film. There is no easy thinking or finding of a glib solution. But our attention has been held by this story of Alec, Duncan, Robbie, and our minds have been made to work on the problem they represent. The film has done its job, the job more films should do and it has done it in a purely visual and cinematic way. The commentary is particularly well written and sincerely and sensibly spoken. The director's handling of the people is excellent, and the cameraman has equalled her with the photography. They have made a film of which they can well be proud.

Propaganda Value: No one seeing this film can fail to be affected by it, and after seeing it, to think.

Danger Area. *Producer:* Sydney Box. *Director:* Henry Cass. *Scenario:* Inez Holden. *Camera:* Raymond Elton. *Production:* Verity Films. M.O.I. Non-T. Length; 20 mins.

Subject: A rush job in a munitions plant. An urgent Admiralty demand for a shell filled with a new type of explosive has to be met at short notice.

Treatment: The story is told largely in dramatic form, with dialogue. The basic idea is, of course, the race against time, with addition of the danger element arising from the handling of a new explosive of uncertain temperament. There is an especially dramatic sequence concerning the dismantling of a fuse; this is shot with a nice sense of suspense and lighting. Throughout the film the direction is sincere and straightforward, if at times a little raw. Perhaps not enough is made of the workers themselves, whose admirable acting could have taken more footage against that devoted to the experts in charge. But in general the film does a good job in portraying the atmosphere of a munitions plant—the elaborate precautions, widely spaced buildings, and the deliberate slow unhurried movements of the personnel.

Propaganda Value: Good.

(*continued overleaf*)

Atlantic Trawler. *Producer:* John Taylor. *Director:* Frank Sainsbury. *Camera:* A. Jeakins, Chic Fowle, Cyril Phillips. Production: Realist Film Unit for M.O.I. Length 20 mins.
Subject: The life of Atlantic trawlermen in wartime.
Treatment: The documentary movement was to a great degree nurtured on the fruits of the sea, herring perhaps more notably than white fish. Anyhow, there is a consistent line of fishing films from *Drifters*, through *Granton Trawler* and *North Sea* to the film here reviewed. It might well be expected that by this time there was little new that could be portrayed, and that we should be seeing once again all the admirable shots of water, seagulls, and ships against the sky, plus suitably intimate shots of the men themselves. Sainsbury has produced all this and done it well, but he has added new and valuable elements. In the first place he has stressed, with great effect, the strange change which has come over the depleted trawling industry in wartime—not merely the dangers but also that special atmosphere which relates to the fact that so many of the boats are on active service. Secondly he has given us, with sympathetic insight, the first true picture of the trawlermen ashore; this sequence is one of the nicest jobs seen in a short documentary for some time, but we understand that it has now been removed by the M.O.I.
Propaganda Value: Good.

Welcome to Britain Strand Film Co. *Producer:* Arthur Elton. *Assoc. Producer:* Legh Clowes. *Director:* Anthony Asquith. *Camera:* Jo Jago. M.O.I. 1 hr.
From the earliest days of talkies, when addressed directly from the screen by Cabinet Ministers, Celebrities and Experts, I have always slid down in my chair, behind the head in front.

I was very suspicious and uneasy when Frank Craven came up to that fence in *Our Town* and spoke to me.

This is just a personal complex, reprehensible if not actually contemptible. It is remarked only as making the more remarkable my enjoyment of *Welcome to Britain*. After the way it began, too. American troops disembarking and Brass Hats lined up in front of a wall. At first glimpse, I knew I was going to be Spoken To. The director didn't rush matters. About half a dozen shots before it happened. The suspense. . . . I had a mind to risk Court Martial by sneaking out.

When this talking was over, the "director" of the film, Burgess Meredith, was left with a firm, large sounding but vague command from the General. Perhaps his perplexity struck a chord of sympathy. Anyway, when he looked up and said that having been three weeks in England he was obviously the very man to tell us all about it, I began to relax and have a good time.

Later they threw in Bob Hope and Beatrice Lillie but, though Bob Hope was particularly spontaneous-sounding and funny, these two irrelevant sequences were hardly necessary. The haphazard, slightly worried and uncertain progress of Burgess Meredith was so diverting I was sorry that, at the end of an hour, he was abruptly detailed for a Battle Course, leaving his film unfinished, with scarcely time to say goodbye.

If Burgess Meredith isn't the best actor on the screen, he is the best ever to have spoken directly from it to his audience. He just does what he likes and it seems OK. He beckons the camera close and whispers to us, he makes silent comment and loud spoken comment, demonstrating what should and what should not be done; he even upsets one of the players who doesn't understand that his asides are addressed to us. He even tackles Brass Hats on our account so that they speak to him and we listen—strange as it seems he never becomes smug, smart or affected nor seems an actor in the Academy Award sense at all. He's too good for an Oscar.

The purpose of the film is to explain England and the English to newly arrived Americans. They may be reckoned more than normally resistant to appeals of any kind, but this one is so persuasive and clear, sympathetic and vigorous that anyone will surely like it, whatever his mood.

I wish the incredibly quaint schoolroom sequence had been less unreal, and it looks as though serious reference to unnecessary travel was cut out, which is a pity. However, there is plenty that is good.

If the public could see this they'd wonder why only American soldiers are so understandingly approached by the M. O. I. Surely the answer is not just Burgess Meredith?

Cambridge. Everyman Films. *Director:* Richard Massingham. *Camera:* Alex Strasser. British Council. Length 25 mins.
Subject: The University of Cambridge.
Treatment: The film covers most facts of University life. Colleges, lecture halls, games, spare time. The interiors are very well shot, and there is some extremely good quality sound in the sync. sequences. On the whole it is a pleasant enough film to look at, even occasionally visually exciting. But it has very little to say. One feels all the time that the commentator is talking for the sake of filling in gaps. Even the shots of Sir William Bragg and the Master of Trinity and others talking to students add little to the film, as they also seem to suffer from the general rush of platitudes. Perhaps if the commentary had been spoken in a more professional way it might not have appeared so dim or, on the other hand, perhaps the British Council had nothing to say about Cambridge.
Propaganda Value: In the phraseology of the film trade press: "Acceptable popular for good-class halls, with useful picture angle for foreign consumption."

Trailers. Various Units.
Treatment: Reviewing these trailers the day after seeing them, it is extremely difficult to remember what any of them were about. There was one about fuel saving and one about Income Tax and another about something else. Different techniques were used and the one done by cartoon was amusing. But surely the message of a trailer should last a little longer than this. One remembers the time when trailers were the brightest flowers in the rather thorny bouquet of the M.O.I. Films Division. This new group of trailers shows that times have changed and for the worse. A trailer's job must be to shock the seat-changing, chattering audience into attention, and at one level of consciousness or another, leave a message. None of this present group, although they are all competently made, could possibly hold anybody's attention. It would be interesting to know why the quality of the trailers has fallen and what has happened to all those bright ideas which, even if they sometimes annoyed the audience, at least compelled their attention and made people listen to the messages they had to give.

Minefield. Army Film Unit. M.O.I. 15 minutes.
Subject: How a minefield is cleared.
Treatment: It is possible that one of the growing points of the documentary film is being carefully nurtured by the Service Film Units. Just as there is a growing and extremely important tendency to make highly specialised films aimed at a particular purpose and for very definite types of audience, so there is a trend towards presenting a documentary subject in as dramatic a form as possible for general cinema audiences. The recording of fact and the presenting of those facts in as dramatic a way as possible is the job the Service Units set out to do.

Minefield is a good example of this technique. An attack in North Africa is about to be launched and the Sappers have got to clear the mines for the tanks and infantry to go through. The men go out into the darkness to map the position of the minefields. their almost animal-sensitive hands groping over the surface of the sand, searching for trip wire, booby-trap and mine. Slowly through the night, working in an atmosphere of perpetual suspense, flattening on the ground when the star shells go up, they complete their survey of the area. From the information they gain the men in charge of the operation choose the best points in the minefields through which to launch the attacks. Just before the attack is begun, the Sappers move forward, again in the dark, to clear the mines from the pathway which has been selected through the wire. Here is danger and suspense in full measure. The whispers through the night and the slow, Hoover-like, creep of the detectors over the sand.

As they move forward about their several jobs of detecting and removing the mines, their nerve-racking calm is clearly shown. They clear the path and the tanks and infantry move forward—another routine job is done—but for a few minutes we too have walked with danger in the dark.

If there is any criticism of this film it is that the obvious dangers are underplayed. Particular mention must be made of the way in which the sequences of the officers planning the attack have been handled. The officers, non-actors, have the usual difficulties with sync. dialogue but, for some reason or another, the scenes look real. Perhaps it is the lighting and the set combining, or maybe it was shot in a tent in North Africa.
Propaganda Value: This film will bring alive the day's news to the cinema audience. Behind those dry words, "The sappers cleared the way," is the story of *Minefield*—a story of heroism, the more heroic for being constant and routine.

Rescue Reconnaissance Shell Film Unit. *Direction:* Grahame Tharp. *Camera:* Sidney Beadle. *Recording:* Leo Wilkins. *Assist. Director:* Lionel Cole. *Produced* by Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. for Ministry of Home Security. 35 mins. Non-T.
Subject: How to locate people who may be buried under the débris of a bombed building in the most efficient way. Instructional film for Civil Defence Rescue Parties.
Treatment: The place is any street in any city. The time is about twenty minutes after a high explosive bomb has fallen. The bomb has demolished three houses. There they are in front of us, the familiar yet fantastic piles of brick and beams, rubble and dust, that only twenty minutes before were three homes, places of rooms and warmth and suppers cooking. It is significant that the film, although a straight instructional in the best sense, never loses sight of the human and

New Documentary Films

(*continued*)

emotional catastrophe which provides the subject of the incident.

The story is all told by means of dialogue. The Incident Officer has arrived before the film starts and has already made his preliminary enquiries. The Rescue squad arrives and the information is passed on to the leader of the party. Seven people lived in the houses but it is not yet clear how many of them were at home at the time the bomb fell. The leader becomes a detective. By cross-examining the neighbours he discovers that in one house there lived a mother and daughter, probably both at home and more than likely in their Anderson shelter where they usually went when there was an alert. In the other there lived a mother, father, two small children and grandmother. The adults were thought to have been in but nobody is very certain about the children. The only person who would probably know for certain would be the little girl buried next door, who went to the same school and usually came back with them. The questioning goes on, the stunned but rallying neighbours doing their best to give clear answers, revealing as they talk the pattern of peoples' lives, of favourite chairs in special corners, of going to bed at six because of working shifts, of children playing on the way home from school. And always in the background the pile of débris and the implicit question—are they alive or dead? Still the leader of the squad is not satisfied, a similar house must be inspected to check the lay out, more questions asked. As one of the neighbours shouts—why don't they get on with the job instead of messing about talking. Now at last they go to work. They surround the heap and from strategically chosen positions they call and tap, first for the mother and child, who being probably in the shelter, are likely to be the easier to find. First they hear the girl, yes, she's alive but very frightened, she thinks her mother is asleep beside her. Putting one man on to the job of reassuring her, they eventually get them both out. When she has recovered a little she tells them that the two children next door were not at home, they had gone to play with a friend in another street. A messenger is sent off to check this information while the squad go to work on the house next door.

The job finished, the men go into their canteen. Here they grumble and argue. They ask the leader the questions that we, the audience, have been asking. Why all the messing about, the detective stuff, why not get on with the job and clear the débris and rescue the people. They are very conscious of the suffering people and are angry at the delays. Using flash-backs, the leader explains that the preliminary examination and questioning saves time, saves lives. He meets all their points and by so doing explains the *reasons* for the *methods* we have seen used. The men are convinced in this instance, but there is a healthy feeling that they are not the sort of people to let what is a sensible procedure, develop into a meaningless routine to bolster up some pet theory from headquarters.

Propaganda Value: It would be difficult to praise this film too highly. Here is the expositional method of film making at its best and all the more powerful for being linked to a strong human story that will make its lesson last. It is to be hoped that a shorter version may be made for more general showing abroad as well as for us to see one day to remind us of what the world war means. Not strategy or world markets or elbow room or ideologies but the foot sticking from beneath the dusty pile of bricks and the breaking voice of a terrified child.

Accident Service. *Production:* G.B.I. *Direction:* A. R. Dobson. *Camera:* Frank North. British Council. Length: 33 mins.

Subject: How anybody in industry who has an accident (particularly in coal-mining) receives the best possible treatment.

Treatment: The film starts with a brief diagrammatic sequence analysing the accident figures for Britain. We then see a miner who has been crushed by a fall being brought to the surface and taken to hospital. He has a fractured spine and receives immediate and expert treatment which is shown in some detail. At the hospital we see many other cases of various kinds, leg injuries, hand injuries and in particular we see a difficult open fracture reduced by modern methods. A skin graft is required and this is shown at various stages. During the operation the camera sees deep into the wound and the work of the surgeon is shown clearly and in detail. The latter part of the film is concerned with the stages of rehabilitation through which an injured worker should pass if he is to be restored to full health and working capacity in the shortest possible time.

Propaganda Value: This film appears to have two goals simultaneously in mind and consequently misses its full effect. It is firstly a general film on the value of an Accident Service which takes continuous responsibility for a patient from the time of an accident up to the time of complete restoration, and secondly and concurrently a technical medical film on a modern method of dealing with a difficult fracture of the leg. The result of this combination of purposes is that the film as a whole is too specialised (and gruesome) for some general audiences whilst it is too general for medical experts who would wish to have a more detailed exposition in the operation sequence and would probably in any case have preferred a rarer and more interesting example of modern surgery to have been chosen. It would almost seem as if the reception of the British Council's *Chest Surgery* film has so impressed its makers that they now believe that the success of any film can be guaranteed by the introduction of a sensational operation—that blood and the surgeon's knife is a sort of box office substitute for sex appeal.

The fact remains that the British Council is following a sound line of production policy in producing technical films of this type and we would only ask them to clarify their minds as to the precise function and audience scope of each.

PUDOVKIN BROADCASTS

Transcript of a Moscow transmission in English, on April 18th, 1944

Before now, Pudovkin's work has won him the Order of Lenin, a Stalin Prize and the title of Honoured Art Worker. A few days ago he was decorated, together with some 500 other people in the Soviet Film Industry, for his work in wartime: the Order of the Red Banner of Labour was conferred on him. We have asked Mikhail Mikhailov to interview him.

MIKHAILOV: Allow me first of all to congratulate you on your decoration.

PUDOVKIN: Thank you.

MIKHAILOV: Perhaps you will tell listeners just how such large numbers of people in the Soviet film industry have come to earn this fine award.

PUDOVKIN: The Government decree tells you that, I think. They have been decorated for successful work in wartime. I should like to note this point, that the country has shown its appreciation of the people involved in the cinegraphic profession. It indicates, it seems to me, that the whole huge organism of the Soviet film industry is coming up to wartime requirements. It is working with the efficiency of a well-regulated factory. I think it would be true to say that they have been decorated for coping with the wartime difficulties. You will know that for our film industry too these difficulties have been very great. When the war began Ukrainian and Belo-Russian studios had to stop work. Several of the factories producing films were in occupied territory. The Moscow and Leningrad studios were evacuated. I dislike that word "evacuated". It would be truer to say that like many other important war industries, our industry was moved to new locations. There were difficulties, of course, but they were overcome, just as they were by the rest of Soviet war economy. The Moscow and Leningrad Studios were moved to Alma Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan.

MIKHAILOV: That was where the last war film *The Country's Call* was filmed, wasn't it?

PUDOVKIN: Quite right. Now, just like other factories, we had to start from scratch on our new site. There was nothing even faintly resembling a studio in Alma Ata. We were given an ordinary theatre building and it took much effort and ingenuity to go on. But we had no right to suspend our work for even the shortest time. Millions of peoples were waiting for new films about the war.

MIKHAILOV: So how did you do it?

PUDOVKIN: The same way as people in other industries. We turned builders, electricians, and so on. We worked among coils of electric wire. Until we had proper studios, we used a real staircase for shooting. It was in surroundings of this kind that Eisenstein started his monumental work of *Ivan the Terrible.*

MIKHAILOV: That certainly is interesting. I suppose there are regular up-to-date studios at Alma Ata now?

PUDOVKIN: Just as there are munitions industries, so there are hundreds of other war factories there as a result of their being moved east. So the film industry now has its additional studios in Alma Ata.

MIKHAILOV: And what are you doing now?

PUDOVKIN: I am working on a film about Admiral Nachimov, the great Russian admiral. Like many other Soviet art workers I find our country's heroic past an inspiring subject.

MIKHAILOV: Have you been following British wartime film developments at all?

PUDOVKIN: Thoroughly, and with the keenest interest. I particularly like British documentaries.

(*continued on page* 31)

LOVE LOCKED OUT

A MYTHICAL REVIEW

by FRANK LAUNDER

A FELLOW we know with an intimate knowledge of the film business (oddly enough not a member of the peerage), has just written a book called "A Guide to the British Film Industry". This handy little volume, which the author estimates could be carried with ease in a large suit-case, should prove an invaluable work of reference for film journalists, members of parliament, civil servants, people who write letters to *The Times*, readers of trade papers and those who have to have the trade papers read to them, directors of insurance companies with masochistic tendencies, visiting American actors who are at a loss to know why they should receive twice their normal money in an industry one-tenth the size of their own, hall-porters and head-waiters at Claridges—after all it's their business as well as ours ("You're looking better this morning, sir. Got over your trouble with the N.A.T.K.E., I hope." It's little touches like that which contribute towards a spirit of comradeship so essential to the making of good pictures); in short the book should be read by all who are interested in the future welfare of the British film industry. Unfortunately, at the moment, the author cannot find a publisher with enough paper to publish his opus, so we have sought and obtained his permission to review it in advance.

He dedicates the book to the big business boys of Hollywood who have done so much towards semi-Americanising the people of this country by establishing the American film on the screens of Britain. We cannot be too grateful, he says, to those Hollywood philanthropists, who for more than twenty years, in spite of all opposition, have given us of their best, their second-best, and even their third-, fourth-, and fifth-best in great quantities for a trifling annual return of something between ten and twenty million pounds. After all, film-going is a habit in the same way that whisky-drinking is a habit, and if we send America our whisky, and they send us their films, it is a fair enough exchange. Those who suggest that we might be happier with a little more of our whisky and a little less of their films have no conception of the principles of international trade.

In his opening chapter the author quotes Sir Alexander Korda as saying that the ultimate judge of film entertainment is "the unaccountable, illogical and inexplicable taste of the public". He proceeds to prove Sir Alexander's contention by pointing out that if you are in Walton-on-the-Naze on a wet Wednesday afternoon when the two or three cinemas there are all showing third-rate American films, if you go at all your taste is undoubtedly unaccountable, illogical and inexplicable. If you retort that you are driven to see one of these films because you have nowhere else to go—then, the author declares forcibly, he has no doubt whatever that Sir Alexander knows the answer to that.

Continuing to quote Sir Alexander as stating that "the surplus inventiveness of our young craftsmen should be directed into making educational and documentary films, in which we have made such magnificent progress", the author suggests that we should take this advice to heart. After the War, if and when the Ministry of Information closes down, and when thousands of our young craftsmen return from the forces, an unhappy situation might arise which would oblige the Government to take steps to foster British feature film production in order that these young men may find an outlet for their activities. This is an appalling prospect. Ninety per cent of the screen-time of our cinemas is the property of Hollywood. The great majority of their more expensive films would not make a profit but for the British market. Are we to have the audacity to attempt—like some band of modern pirates—to muscle in with our product, in our cinemas, on their screen-time? Certainly not. It practically amounts to a demand for expropriation. Let us therefore divert the energies of these thousands of young craftsmen into educational and documentary films (preferably sub-standard non-theatrical) so that we shall (*a*) not embarrass the Government, and (*b*) make no effort to interfere with the unfettered control of Hollywood over the British home market.

Offering a word of praise to those British producers who are anxious to employ American writers, directors and technicians in order to put British culture on the screens of the world, the author declares that if we are obstinately determined to express ourselves as a nation through the medium of the film, how much better it is to allow those who know how to express themselves in terms of America to say what they think we are thinking so that the world may have a true picture of the Britain that the Americans believe to be Britain. Film history, the author admits, is rather depressing on this point, but that should not deter us.

The author then moves on to deal with British film production as it exists to-day. He applauds the A.C.T. slogan, "Throw Away Your Trusts" because it appears to be directed primarily against Mr. Rank. This roving adventurer, he says, seeks not only to create an opening for British films in the world markets, but actually to occupy 5 per cent of the screen-time of his own cinemas with his own films. Cynics who maintain that if we must have monopolies, there may be some advantage in having a small British one alongside a large American one, because in the long run they may tend to cancel each other out, are simply indulging in wishful thinking.

Finally the author makes a slashing attack on the leaders of the British film industry, particularly the insufferable independent producers, whom he accuses of being narrow and selfish in attempting to persuade the Government to introduce legislation similar to that which the unscrupulous French, flouting the rights of Hollywood, brought in to protect their industry some years before the war. He contrasts this mean outlook with the great-hearted attitude of Hollywood, and quotes Mr. Nathan D. Golden's statement in the December issue of the *International Photographer*: "The United States Motion Picture Industry", wrote Mr. Golden, "feels unanimously that the quality standard is the only type of barrier to which American films should be subjected in order to do business in world markets. . . ." That, the author declares, is liberality itself, hastily adding that it is carrying generosity too far. American imports unto this country between 400 and 600 films a year, and for them to offer voluntarily to reduce this number to some fifty or sixty* is a gesture without parallel in the history of Anglo-American film relations. This surely nails once and for all the lie that the big business boys of Hollywood are unwilling to decrease their profits by releasing any part of the 90 per cent of British screen-time which they control. It dismisses also the fable that Hollywood is anxious to continue to sell the United Kingdom distribution rights of its tenth-rate quickies for sums ranging between £500 and £1,000—figures with which the independent British producers complain they cannot possibly compete. In fact it is an offer so magnanimous and so sweeping that the sooner the big boys get after Mr. Golden and point out to him what he's "been and gone and done", before the British film industry grasps the offer with both hands, the better it will be for the continued prosperity of Hollywood films in Britain.

(*Tail-piece:* The author of the book has received an offer of work from a Hollywood company.)

*Sir Alexander Korda stated that about fifty quality films were produced in Hollywood in a year.

PUDOVKIN (*continued from page* 30)

Quite early in the war I saw several short British films of this kind, in which material that might almost be called newsreel, was interwoven with feature material. In them I seemed to sense an interesting and unusual style being introduced in British film productions, and the film *In Which We Serve* convinced me of it. I saw in its characters real living Englishmen; Britain at war. I saw how these people live, what they are fighting for, and why. I think the appearance of such a magnificent picture in these years of gloomy ordeal is not at all surprising. I remember seeing films which determined the Soviet film style, which also came into being at a time of great stress—in the years when our State was being born. It gratifies me the more to note these successes in British film productions, because it seems to me that before the war British films had no really distinctive style.

MIKHAILOV: The last thing I should like to ask, is this: which in your opinion are the future tasks of cinematography?

PUDOVKIN: The cinematographic art has a much more powerful effect on the people than any other. Accordingly, I was considering it during the war and immediately after it, as being particularly great. I think we need strong and bold films that will lead the people of the United Nations towards three principal lines: the first is —to bring to speedy annihilation the fascist brigand army by the concerted efforts of the nations. Justice demands that. The second is—the utter disqualification of the present fascist theories, for that will help to rid the world of slavery and make for liberty. The third is—show all that was best and more virile in the past, all that is best and most virile in the present. That will serve to prevent a recrudescence of the despicable fascist propaganda and make for lasting peace and cultural progress. Liberty, justice and culture—these are the three ideals which the Powers are called upon to serve.

MIKHAILOV: Thank you for a most interesting and informative talk.

TRAVELLER'S TALE

by ALEX SHAW

THERE was a very small scale map of the world outside the lounge on A deck, just round the corner from the Angela Thirkells and bound volumes of *Blackwood's*. It was one of those maps which clearly mark the positions of the major continents and oceans but are rather reticent about the boundaries of the Balkan countries, the district North East of Calcutta and the Polish–Russian frontier.

Interrupting fierce games of shuffleboard and Under-and-Over each news bulletin blared its way across deck chairs and trays of drinks. It silenced the footsteps of the ever walking Merchant Navy men on their way to join new ships, the small-talk of the young men bound for the oil ports of the Persian Gulf, the incessantly clicking knitting needles of the group of nurses on their way to Ceylon and the share and steel conversations of the mysterious business men. The news raised questions of where and how. Our lack of geographical knowledge was displayed in the clear Mediterranean sunshine.

How far from Messina to anywhere? What sort of road was the Road to Rome? These were the kind of questions we asked each other in the autumn of 1943. But when the announcer came to the Russian front we could all be pundits, for, placed securely on a notice board were large scale maps of Russia with even the obscurest hamlet marked and the rivers and hills plain for all of us to look at. Ralph Parker, *The Times* Moscow correspondent, saw to it that even if we did not know much about Sicily, we should share his knowledge of Russia.

History was being made and history itself was just across the water as the coast of Africa rolled by—Benghazi, Derna and Tobruk, Bizerta and Cape Bon. But war had left them, jumping the ancient sea, and they were again small towns under a blue sky.

We talked, as travellers do, of this and that, with the restlessness that the sea gives to all conversation when everyone is anxious to get on with a job and the sea is only a tiresome interruption. We talked, among other things of films in general and of Russian reactions to Anglo–American films in particular. Some of the results were unexpected, some could have been foretold, but they helped to fill in details of a larger picture and even though trivial in themselves are therefore worth recording. A fuller report from Moscow may be forthcoming later on.

First of all, some notes on the film production background.

Russian film production at the beginning of the war had made some plans for evacuating in line with other movable industries. But the German advance found the studios at Odessa, Kiev, Moscow and Leningrad still working. They had to move and move quickly.

Alma Ata on the Turkestan border was a place where a few films were made for some of the republics. These films were mostly shorts of a localised character and the facilities for making them were correspondingly small. This became the new Russian film centre and to it were moved technicians and equipment. It must have been a hectic period. Rather as if some of the gear and people from Shepherd's Bush, Denham and Pinewood were suddenly shifted to a cinema situated a thousand or two miles away. But book and periodical publishing had more or less packed up and it was the job of radio and film to carry on the spreading of information.

One immediate task was to destroy the German strength and invulnerability build-up created by their successes. The Russians made films to destroy this idea—partisan films which often centred round the activities of three grey-bearded old peasants who always diddled the Germans in the end. The Germans were caricatured on the lines of *Shoulder Arms*, and although the films were crude they were made for the moment and did their job. In this connection one must remember that at that time there was in Russia an almost complete ignorance of the outside world. The people had no information about the Germans, for instance, by which any rumour however fantastic could be checked.

(*continued on p.* 33)

Documentaries do not seem to have had a very good showing (this situation may have changed by now) and when they are shown are run with sub-titles or sometimes redubbed. The newsreels of course have had a success. *Malta Convoy* being particularly timely and useful.

The Russian audience, like any other audience, want spectacle from abroad, but they also want to know about foreign domestic life. They have, as a country, been forced to a certain extent to lift the veil with which they have hitherto covered anything foreign, and there is obviously a lively and growing curiosity. *Salute John Citizen* interested its specialised audience because it was a picture of English domestic life. The book about Mr. Bunting had an enormous sale and caused widespread interest because it also satisfied this demand for information about the outside world.

The Russian film-makers themselves are increasingly aware of the necessity of pleasing their audiences as opposed to teaching them. In 1942, the Moscow conference called "Cinema and Democracies" suggested many new trends in Russian film production. Ilya Ehrenberg spoke on Chaplin, taking as his theme the line that Chaplin was an expression of the people's voice. For many years the Russian cinema has had to teach and it is reasonable to suppose that the new generation accept most of those teachings as part of their lives and now demand films which will entertain in a more direct way.

Of course it is possible to make a film which will both teach and entertain, but for many years the Russian film has often taught first and entertained afterwards.

Pudovkin, who came from Alma Ata to attend the conference, and to study English and American films, also spoke in support of the popular film. He took as his subject the "Hero in the Film" and dwelt at length on the part played by the hero in American Westerns. He suggested that this type of film structure would be very suitable for Russia, and asked his listeners to consider carefully this idea. In a country in whose films the Idea or the Group plays the rôle usually taken by the hero, this idea must have been entirely new, although perhaps *Suvurov* and *Alexander Nevski* had suggested possible developments in this direction.

But the ideal of the film as a medium of international friendship is still far off. Although both England and Russia are making films there does not seem to be any good way of getting them shown to each other. That there are two very different reasons for this we know, but the results seem to be the same. One would imagine that the Russian audiences are quite capable of making up their minds for themselves without the intervention of a committee and that we are not quite so averse to Russian films or so besotted by the star system, as Wardour Street seems to think.

A few cinemas in London, Edinburgh, Moscow and Leningrad and one or two other towns, showing a small number of films to a special sort of audience, is not enough. However useful the job they are doing may be, it is at the moment only providing material for a handful of writers to use in the weekly press. Far more people read about Russian films than ever see them. Probably the non-theatrical field could give a lead over here and certainly it would not be difficult for Russians to organise wider showing in their country.

AN EXAMINATION OF COLOUR

by RONALD NEAME

(Reprinted in abridged form from the A.C.T. Journal).

LET's face it, colour has come to stay. There are some of us that like it and some of us that don't, but, whether we do or we don't, it's not going to make the slightest difference. Each year for the past five years the percentage of technicolor production has increased, and it's my guess that in five years' time black and white will be on the way out for good. Of course colour will be vastly different from what it is to-day. I am convinced that before long we shall be able to dispense with three negatives and when Monopack, or its equivalent, is in general use, the present technicolor camera will go the same way as the "camera booth" of the early talkies went. Mind you, there's nothing wrong with the camera, some of its features are first-class, and should be adapted at once to black and white cameras. Remote control focus, what a joy that is, and how much superior the viewfinder with its minimum of parallax. But size is against it, and although Technicolor will support it up to the hilt and maintain that it really is quite mobile, there is no doubt that it considerably slows up production and is a poor substitute for the comparatively light and up-to-date Mitchell. Soon, too, faster film will enable us to get rid of some of the oversize lighting equipment which at the moment makes colour a heavy-handed business.

Lighting for technicolor is rather like drawing with a piece of charcoal after having got used to a very fine pencil, but it is surprising how quickly you get used to working with a "key" light of 800 foot candles instead of the 100 foot candles that you have probably been working with in the past.

When even experienced technicians go on to a technicolor set for the first time they get the impression that a great mass of light is turned on to set and artists from every direction, without any apparent system, and this has led to the quite wrong impression, in some circles, that lighting for technicolor is a haphazard affair, In actual fact, lighting for colour is almost in all respects the same as lighting for black and white, with the exception of contrast.

Contrast

Contrast is one of the great problems of technicolor to-day. In black and white, if negative contrast is increased the blacks look more black and the whites look more white, shadows go heavier and highlights stronger. In colour, something else happens as well—the reds look more red, blues look more blue, pink faces look more pink—sometimes "lobster"—and before you know where you are you are faced with *very* glorious technicolor. As in black and white, the higher the contrast the better the definition. Hollywood has realised this and that is the reason why all colour pictures from America are extremely colourful. With them, definition and visibility are of paramount importance, they are prepared to sacrifice more subtle tones of colour for clarity of vision. In England this becomes somewhat of a problem for the lighting cameraman, producers and directors, not for the most part being technicians, want the best of both worlds, they quite naturally want good definition but are determined not to put up with "red, white and hot technicolor" as served up by America, and it is very difficult to make them realise to what a large extent these two things are bound up together.

Colour Separation

Out of this arises another problem—"colour separation." This again plays a large part in deciding the quality of results. If a face is photographed up against a bright blue, no matter how flatly it is lit, it will stand well away from the background. If, on the other hand, the background is pink, only the most carefully modelled lighting will give reasonable results. Here again you can see how Hollywood technicians work! In all their big musicals (*The Girls They Left Behind* is a perfect example) sets and costumes are all designed to give the greatest possible "colour separation"; thus even the flattest flood lighting will give good bright results on the screen.

There is no doubt that seeing your first test in colour is a great thrill. Technicolor *always* "do you proud" on your first test—two, or at the most three, days after you shoot, it will arrive back from West Drayton, its quality good and true in every detail. I'm sure your first reaction will be—"But this is easy"—and so it is in theory, and when everything goes right. But making a test is one thing, shooting on the floor —perhaps in confined spaces—another, and there are still plenty of hurdles to get over before technicolor becomes easy. Some of these hurdles are going to remain until after the war.

Problems of Lighting

One of your first major problems will be getting enough foot candles out of a light while still having it sufficiently near full flood to cover a reasonable area of subject matter. Most of the lighting equipment in this country is getting pretty old and worn. Naturally the studios stick up for it, and claim that lighting cameramen are fussy and unreasonable people, but it is undeniably a fact that we are not getting nearly as much light from our lamps as we used to, and it has become necessary to have your 150 amp. key not more than 25 feet from your actors in order to get a good even light of 800 foot candles. This means that if your set is on the large size, you cannot light your artists from the rail, it being too far off. Therefore the best thing to do is to put your lamps on stands on the floor, or on rostrums. In black and white there is no problem here: it is only a two-minute job to bring in a Mole "Junior", but in colour the increase in lighting time is extensive; carrying a 150 amp. H.I. arc around is not a very quick business. I became convinced that Hollywood must have found a way round this problem, and sent a cable to Mole Richardson of America, asking for photometer readings from one of their 150 amp. arcs. When I received the reply I took the same readings from one of our own lamps—the result makes rather a sad story:

Readings with 150 amp. H.I. arc with Y.1 Filter, 25 ft. from Weston Meter

	Hollywood Studio foot candles	*Home Studio* foot candles
Full flood	385	160
10 turns spot	610	230
20 ,, ,,	1,410	460
30 ,, ,,	4,220	1,360

There would appear to be two main reasons for this pitiful discrepancy. The first, "Pool" carbons, and the second that the Americans are putting 150 amps through their lamps, whereas up to now we have only been using 136 amps. I am glad to say that recent experiments with higher amperage have already proved a great success and I hope before long all studios will convert their grids in this way. In addition to the light being brighter it is also much cleaner and whiter, and this is indeed important.

It is essential when lighting for colour to make sure that your arcs are burning correctly. If the gap between the positive and negative carbons is too large, in addition to loss of light the colour of the light will change to pink instead of white, and our old pal "lobster" will crop up again.

While writing about the colour of light, it would be as well to mention another problem, the problem of "practical" lamps on sets: wall brackets, table and standard lamps, etc. The ordinary 60 watt or 100 watt bulb is far too yellow to look natural, therefore it is necessary to dip these in a blue cellulose before using them on colour sets.

So far, I have discussed only straightforward lighting, and before passing from this to night and effect stuff, I would like to sum up by stressing the importance of getting fully exposed negatives with plenty of detail in the shadows. There is no doubt that sometimes excellent results can be obtained by breaking this rule, but generally

speaking a well-exposed negative will give the most consistent and most pleasant effect. I think it is right to say that technicolor exteriors are lovely, and not a little of this loveliness is due to good, bright daylight and its accompanying strong and healthy negative. The amount of "control" that Technicolor have to exercise in order to give you a good result on the screen is something to be marvelled at, and it is not fair to make their problems greater by giving them a negative that because of thinness, or contrast, has little or no latitude.

Effect Lighting

Now to pass on to effect lighting. This is so much a matter for the individual that I do not intend to deal with it at length. "Night Exterior" in the studio is, perhaps, the most generally used effect. I have already mentioned the necessity of dropping the Y.1 filter, which will result in a colder more realistic night light. Hollywood obtain their romantic moonlight shots with the aid of light blue gelatine filters placed over their lamps, and these in conjunction with Y.1 filters covering lamps lighting the interior of windows, etc., can be very effective indeed. As a rough guide, a key light reading of about 300 foot candles to 350 foot candles will give a good rendering of moonlight strength, but this is naturally dependent on the amount of shadow light which accompanies it.

Firelight effects, as I have already mentioned, are best obtained with the use of incandescent light, or by putting panchromatic carbons in arcs. When shooting the seance scene for *Blithe Spirit* in flickering firelight, I used a key light from the floor of about 500 foot candles, but the effective light was reduced to about 400 foot candles by the use of paraffin torches held in front of the lamp to create flicker.

Technicolor is great fun, but it is spoilt for me at the moment by one great handicap, the fact that all rushes are viewed in black and white, printed from the blue record. The result is hardly pleasant to the eye and one never enjoys seeing them, they give little or no indication as to what the colour will be like and are as often as not misleading. The short sections of colour that one *does* see (very often many days after the scenes are shot) are on and off the screen so quickly, and are so very often out of balance from the colour point of view, that they are only just worth while. These short sections are known as "pilots", and after viewing a few one begins to understand very quickly just what problems Technicolor technicians have to cope with. A "pilot" can be too red, too blue, too green or too yellow; too flat, too contrasty, too light or too dark, and at least half a dozen other things besides, small wonder that Mr. Kay Harrison is putting up a strong fight to prevent all his experts from going to the Forces; and experts they truly are.

Yes, of course, colour has its handicaps, but colour has been born, and this healthy and sometimes unruly child is growing rapidly every day. I think it is true to say that at the moment it is suited best to costume and colourful subjects, but as each new production is added to the now long Technicolor list the colours will improve and become more subtle, until one day colour won't be a child any more. It will become, just as "Sound" has, an integral part of every film, and the hackneyed phrase "Glorious Technicolor" will die a natural death in the same way as "100% All Talking, Singing and Dancing" did ten years ago.

BOOK REVIEW

Film, by Roger Manvell. A Pelican Book. 9*d*.

There was, if you remember, about 1929 a very good film called *The Virginian*, quite a large piece of the theme of which was how Gary Cooper's girl friend Mary Brian had come out West, determined, as the local school teacher, to reform the shooting, drinking and general masculine rough habits of the district—to make it an effeminate God-fearing woman-fearing community. A couple or so years later we had the same theme in *Cimarron* with Irene Dunne starting a chapel and Sunday school and sorrowfully reproaching Richard Dix for his association with Estelle Taylor, the loose woman of the town. This emasculation of pioneer American life has always had a snake-like fascination for film makers; and sure enough now the film-makers are for it too: here, brethren, is dear Dr. Manvell complete with poke-bonnet, hymn book and reticule to reprove us for our wickedness and wild ways, to show us how to be good little boys and girls, emasculate our films and make the world safe for effeminacy. It's a familiar pattern: there are the "culturally privileged" classes who enthuse over such masterpieces as *Winterset* and *Citizen Kane*, and there are the "culturally under-privileged" majority who enjoy musicals and gangsters, action and sentiment. It is the self-appointed duty of the former to raise the latter to their own rarefied heights, to stop them enjoying themselves, make them "demand a more complicated satisfaction" and turn the cinema into a night school. Sure enough our old friend "creative leisure" bobs up again as lively as ever. No wonder Dr. Manvell says of *Intolerance*, in which Griffith dealt once and for all with the impertinent pretensions of such hypocrites, that it "could not be seen by a modern audience without embarrassment".

All this priggishness, of course, is common enough to-day, in film writing too, for this is an age when the middle classes, tiring after a hundred years of only robbing the masses' pockets, are instead concentrating on lecturing them on the brutishness of their pleasures. What is new, though, and very disturbing, is that this book specifically links this patronising view of life with the documentary movement, and for our own good name and reputation it is high time for us to protest. There are, I know, quite a few people in the film business, not least in documentary, who do conceive of themselves as angels of learning bringing enlightenment to the culturally under-privileged, but I can assure Dr. Manvell that that is not the viewpoint of most of us. Dr. Manvell claims to be a "student" of John Grierson, but his attention must have sadly wandered during class if that is the lesson he has brought away from it. If he wants to know what Grierson really thought of that sort of thing, I suggest he turns up the files of *World Film News* and reads his review of *Dead End*.

Dr. Manvell's book has a very full bibliography at the end and itself consists to a great extent of quotations from other writers. In spite of his statement that his interest in films began at the age of five, I suggest that his approach to films is purely literary and that he has spent more time reading about films than seeing them. To a real film-fan, going to the pictures has become a disgustingly ingrained habit (reproved alike by parents, parson and schoolteacher) long before the childish lips have learned to say "Dilys Powell". According to Dr. Manvell's potted biography, from 1924–6 he was 15–17, an age at which real addicts are somehow getting to the pictures six times a week or more. During that period Harold Lloyd made *Girl Crazy* and *College Days*, Buster Keaton made *The Cameraman* and *College*, Chaplin made *The Gold Rush*, King Vidor made *The Big Parade*, and Raoul Walsh made *What Price Glory*, all films of a terrific impact. Yet you can search Dr. Manvell's pages in vain for any reference to these films or the effect they had on him (except that two of them are listed at the end). Again, around 1930 he would have been about 21, an eager undergraduate anxious to see any new film, good or bad. The arrival of talkies plus the results of the slump made that one of the most fertile and creative periods of American film making—the gangsters, the comedies, the new humanism, represented by *Applause*, *City Streets*, *Taxi*, *Larceny Lane*, *Manslaughter*, *Laughter*, *Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford*, *Employees' Entrance*, *Street of Chance*, *Quick Millions*, and a couple of dozen more, not one single one of which is mentioned in this book. I think Dr. Manvell has been needlessly rash in rushing in with a book of this sort on a basis of a few years' film going, the study of a number of books and a smattering of film gossip. As he plunges heavily this way and that through the film world he contrives to drop enough bricks to build a 2,000-seater super cinema, and all with the disarming air of infallibility of a pedagogue. A very few of the choicest:—*The Blue Angel*, directed by Erich von Stroheim, Jaubert continually spelled Joubert; red photographs black, *Song of Ceylon over*-exposed, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Joyce and Proust as Realists, the magnificent combination, Venus Aphrodite, and the statement that films under feature length do not need the Censor's certificate. The style of writing has all the grace and sense of purpose of a puppydog worrying an old bowler hat, enlivened by such flashes as "distorts into dominance", "fostered into subjection" and the cryptic pronouncement "the period after the war will be a continuous public event". But nicest of all to film people will be to find an old joke resurrected and solemnly set down in print; "since light travels from screen to audience more quickly than the sound from the amplifiers, the sound precedes the image on the celluloid by some nineteen frames."

You may wonder why it is necessary to be so hard on poor Dr. Manvell, who after all no doubt means well and is doing his best; but the issue the book raises is too important to be treated lightly. This book is typical of a danger that is threatening all our future to-day, and progressive movements and the film business in particular—the tendency to take things too much for granted, to ignore the basis of heavy work on which our civilisation stands, to think that human progress can be achieved the easy way; by the casting of a vote, the election of a party to office or the passing of some benevolent piece of legislation, without the long grind, the sweat, the disillusion and disappointment, the hard work and the failure, above all the hard work, which alone can make any real progress and consolidate it. Film workers who gaily foresee for themselves a political wangle ending in a safe and easy future out of the struggle, behind the protection of bureaucratic petticoats, are as irresponsible as Dr. Manvell who thinks that a few visits to Russian and Continental films and a study of the available literature give him the right to spread himself in a book.

It must be added that the book has, in the middle, a very generous if not very well chosen ration of stills, and, at the end, an excellent chapter on starting a Film Society.

Forecast for Film Societies

By H. Forsyth Hardy

Prospects for a film society entering its sixth wartime season are not so arid as might have been expected. There have been two or three materialisations of "the last film out of France" (the term will not have currency much longer); new Russian films have been appearing regularly during the summer; and experimental work from other sources has reached a promising volume. In this article I would like to discuss the feature films which seem like to be available.

Marcel Carné's brilliant film, *Le Jour se Leve*, is still running at Studio One as I write but ought to be available before the end of the season. Jean Gabin's performance in this film and in Duvivier's American-made *The Impostor* present an acute contrast in effectiveness and an analytic comparison of the films might be an instructive exercise for film societies. Working with Carné on *Le Jour se Leve* were Curt Courant and the late Maurice Jaubert, and the contributions of these artists should be noted by observers of the higher flights of film craftsmanship. Duvivier's *Heart of the Nation* was completed in Hollywood and has an introduction and commentary in English spoken by Charles Boyer. Its backward glance at French resistance to German aggression over a century is somewhat self-conscious and the weight of impending catastrophe seems to have depressed the spirit of director and players; but it has many felicities of observation and direction and develops for the susceptible a bitter-sweet appeal. Another pre-war French film, waiting for presentation, is *Ramuntcho*, a delightful story of life in the Basque country, which was originally shown to members of the Film Society in London.

Of the Russian story films, notable have been *The Childhood of Maxim Gorky*, the first part of the trilogy of which *My Universities* forms the third part; and *Baltic Deputy* which, though it reverts to the revolutionary period for its inspiration, is fresh and stirring. Two composite films on Russia, made in America, will have a special interest for film societies. *The Russian Story* includes excerpts from most of the best-known Russian films and while its primary purpose is to survey Russian history, it offers a fascinating opportunity of glimpsing again some of the memorable passages in the work of Pudovkin, Eisenstein, and Dovjenko, among other directors. A more ambitious film in the same style is *The Battle of Russia*, from Frank Capra's series made primarily for the information of American Servicemen. The early sequences of this brilliantly assembled and edited film lucidly survey the history, natural resources, and the people of Russia, while the remainder of the eighty-minute picture is devoted to the German attack, the Russian stands before Moscow and at Leningrad and Stalingrad, and to the first campaigns which drove the Germans eastward. Even in a notable series *The Battle of Russia* is outstanding and, on interest and merit, it ought to be given a place in film society programmes.

The Forgotten Village has made its long-delayed appearance. It does not carry the certificate of the British Board of Film Censors but this offers no hindrance to its private exhibition by societies. The association of John Steinbeck, Herbert Kline and Alexander Hackensmid has produced a film of compelling interest. I saw, about the same time a revival of Basil Wright's *Song of Ceylon* and thought how harmoniously the two films would share a programme.

Some film societies will want to make good the inadequate circulation given to *Strange Incident* (*The Ox-Bow Incident*). William Wellman's film would make an excellent basis for an American programme. It is possible that a copy of *Winterset* may be available for revival.

Policy on revivals must take account of local conditions. As I suggested in a previous article a film society cannot fulfil its function as an advance guard by only reviving old films; but part of its function is to provide an opportunity for seeing again notable productions which have not been shown for some years. If a film society is recruiting, as it ought to be, younger members, they will want to see the films they are constantly reading about. It is certain that high up on any list of suggestions for revivals would be *Un Carnet de Bal*, *La Kermesse Heroïque*, and *Mayerling*, all of which are available. In this connection *Seeds of Freedom*, an American-made adaptation of Eisenstein's *The Battleship Potemkin*, should be noted. The vulgarity of the dubbed dialogue is unparalleled but the magnificence of the visuals is little impaired.

In a later article I hope to discuss shorts and the opportunities they offer for programmes composed on a theme.

LETTERS

DEAR SIR,

Your leading article, "Mr. Rank and the Educational Film" is exceedingly interesting because of the light it throws on the mentality of your leader writer. Firstly—like Goebbels—he is unable to regard the instructional film as distinct from the propaganda picture. Secondly, he believes that British teachers will use any instructional films that are handed out to them, which proves he has never tried to make an instructional film for British teachers, whose intellectual integrity is above suspicion. Thirdly, he seems to think that all British instructional film makers are so venal that they will make films at anyone's bidding to keep their jobs. Has he never heard of the Instructional Film Unit who handed in their resignations to the late Mr. Maxwell, during the slump of 1934, rather than do work which offended their sense of right?

Perhaps the willingness of film technicians to make and teachers to show any kind of government film in war-time, since they conceive it their duty to do so, has misled your writer into believing these groups will accept propaganda either from the government or from private interests in the years of peace. If he truly believes this, he owes two bodies of public spirited and independent workers an apology,

*The Studios, Lime Grove, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.*12 MARY FIELD

2*nd June*, 1944.

[We are sorry to see so good a technician as Mary Field voicing the fashionable bogey-man story of those opposed to democratic enterprise on the part of the community. *D.N.L. Editorial Board.*]

Notes of the Month

(*continued from p.* 26)

launched with the government's blessing, since their object was mainly propaganda.

"But here we have a documentary film which is a pioneer venture, the first as such to be launched by a company which hitherto has concerned itself with entertainment.

"The film *Out of Chaos* has been made for Two Cities Films by Jill Craigie, in private life Mrs. Jeffrey Dell, wife of author-film director Jeffrey Dell. Everybody engaged in film-making will remember the name of Mary Field in connection with the British Instructional Films, but one might call Jill Craigie a pioneer in her choice of subject which is not only unusual, but a difficult one.

"This film is the first serious attempt in this country to be made about contemporary art and painters who are very modern, but very sensitive when one meets them. Ordinary people have quite the wrong idea about the modern painter, conjured no doubt by La Vie de Boheme. Actually, most of them look very much like the average Englishman. Henry Moore, who appears in the film, is quite an ordinary-looking little man—the kind one often sees on the 8.30 every morning."

Correction

In the article "Patience or Strip-Poker?" appearing in last issue of D.N.L., there is the statement that along with a number of other films *Contraband* was made by the Balcon team at Ealing.

Contraband was not made at Ealing; it was made by the Michael Powell-Emeric Pressburger combination for British National at Denham in 1940.

CARL MAYER 1894-1944

An appreciation by Paul Rotha

MOST WRITERS who work in films are already writers of books and plays, or, at the least, they are journalists. Carl Mayer never wrote a play, a book or an article. He wrote only in film terms. He was an integral product of the medium he loved and understood so well.

Through Robert Flaherty, I first met Carl Mayer, in London, in 1936, but I had respected the name since the early '20s. It had been a script credit on some of the famous German films of what has been called the Golden Period. In Berlin in 1931 I had heard his name spoken with reverence; but it was only later, when I came to know him so well, that I realised the full extent of his influence.

He was born at Graz, Austria, in 1894, one of three brothers. He wanted to be an actor, then a painter, but became a kind of story-editor at a local theatre. In Berlin in 1919 he conceived *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. Of that conception I wrote in detail in *World Film News*, September, 1938. Here is his work only for the record:—

1919. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, directed by Robert Wiene.
1920. *Genuine*, directed by Robert Wiene.
1921. *The Hunchback and the Dancer*, directed by F. W. Murnau.
1921. *Shattered* (*Scherben*), directed by Lupu Pick.
1922. *Backstairs* (*Hintertreppe*), directed by Leopold Jessner.
1922. *Vanina*, directed by Arthur von Gerlach.
1923. *New Year's Eve* (*Sylvester*), directed by Lupu Pick.
1924. *The Last Laugh*, directed by F. W. Murnau.
1925. *Tartuffe*, directed by F. W. Murnau.
1926. *Berlin*, directed by Walter Ruttmann.
1927. *Edge of the World*, directed by Karl Grune.
1927. *Sunrise*, directed by F. W. Murnau.

Caligari and *Genuine* were the only two films to use expressionist painted backgrounds. This was not Mayer's idea, but that of the designers, Warm, Reimann, Rohrig. If you look at *Caligari* today, however, you respect it not so much for its sets or its formalised acting but for its story, and the way the camera is used to present the madman's outlook on the world. For Carl Mayer saw everything through the camera. It was the flow of images, the creation of atmosphere by selected details, the expression of character by visual means, that compelled him to write films which refused to use printed titles to tell their story. With most other films, claim for this masterly technique would be given to the director, but because of his method of script-writing, Carl Mayer must take the major credit. His scripts were written in infinite detail, with meticulous instructions to director and cameraman. He frequently presided at the shooting and always had final say in the editing His script of *Sunrise* is circulated to this day in Hollywood as a model of structure and continuity.

In the same way that he found himself logically writing scripts without titles, so he came to suggest the moving camera. That was in *New Year's Eve*. The camera had, it is true, been put on motor-cars and trains before that, but only for novelty's sake. Reminiscing, Carl told me many times how he fought with the problem of expressing time in that film. The clock in the town square dominated the story, which told the events minute by minute in the hour preceding midnight. "Through the pages of my manuscript", he said, "the face of the clock tower moved closer and closer towards me. It had to move, to grow bigger. So the camera had to move. Guido Seeber mounted it on a perambulator. It was so obvious." The next year, he gave full vent to this new idea, and with the help of Carl Freund, *The Last Laugh* was a revolution in moving camerawork. Its showing in America lead to the ubiquitous use of the camera-dolly and the crane, now built with such elaborate mechanism.

From a story aspect, Mayer's great contribution was his choice of subject and characters. One must remember that the popular German films in 1920–1924 were the lavish spectacular pictures, imitations of the Italian *Salambo* and *Cabiria*. Successes of the day were *Anne Boleyn*, *Dubarry*, *Sumurun*, and *The Loves of Pharaoh*, some of them financed by Hugenberg as anti-allied propaganda. Set against this *kitsch*, Carl Mayer's simple, warm, human approach to the relationship of a few individuals—usually drawn from a lower middle-class environment, often concentrated on the story of a single character—was a new sociological use of cinema. *Berlin* was also his conception, but he disliked Ruttmann's soulless handling of the idea and asked for his name to be stripped from the credits. Few of these films were commercially successful if compared with the flamboyant romances, but they were the films that made Germany famous. It was to their creators that Hollywood offered big contracts. Murnau, Gliese, Lubitsch, Freund Leni, Veidt, Jannings; most of them sacrificed themselves on the Hollywood machine. To Carl Mayer, whose script of *The Last Laugh* was studied so enviously in America, Fox made a handsome offer to write *Sunrise*. He wrote it, in his own good time; but he wrote it in Europe.

He was a careful, patient worker. He would take days over a few shots, a year or more over a script. He would wrestle and fight with his problems all day and all night. He would go long lonely walks with them. He would never deliver a script until he was wholly satisfied that the problems were solved. He would rather cancel his contract and return the money than be forced to finish a script in the wrong way. He had iron principles arising from the film medium itself, and never once departed from them. His instinct and love for film dominated his way of living. Film mattered most and he gave everything, including his health, to it.

To Paris he went with Elizabeth Bergner and Czinner in the early talkie days, and with them he worked on several films—*Der Traumende Mund* and *Ariane*. He came to England in 1932 and began a twelve year period of helping others. He took no screen credits here, except only on the film I made for *The Times* newspaper in '38 and '39, but did advisory work on *Pygmalion* and *Major Barbara* among others. His script of the East End no one would produce. His fascinating idea of translating Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* remained only an idea in script form. He gave much time to criticising scripts and cutting copies at Rotha Films and no technician can have failed to learn from him if they so wanted. To *World of Plenty* he contributed a great deal. Of the big commercial companies, only Two Cities recognised his talent and for them this last year, thanks to del Guidice, he acted as consultant. A few weeks before his death he received a letter from Dr. Siegfried Kraćauer, from New York, who is writing for the Guggenheim Foundation a book on the social and political background of the great German films. Kracauer has realised the great influence of Carl Mayer; almost every German film of the Golden Period leads back to his inspiration.

Such men in this mad, money-crazy industry of ours are rare. Had he craved a fortune, his name in tall letters, Carl could have had it at a price he was not prepared to pay—liberty to write as and how be believed. He loved life with a happiness you do not find normally among film makers. He loved all films and could find something to talk about in the worst of pictures. Above all, he loved people—the people he met in cafés and trains and parks. He seldom read books and possessed but a dozen connected with subjects on which he was working. He devoured newspapers. His little money he gave away to make others happy.

They are nearly all dead — that group which made German films so famous. Of them all, Carl Mayer's name will remain longest, for from him they drew their inspiration. He belonged to films like no man before him; his body died, July 1st, 1944, from cancer; his name and work will live on.

FILM LIBRARIES

Borrowers of fims are asked to apply as much in advance as possible, to give alternative booking dates, and to return the films immediately after use. H: A hire charge is made. F: Free distribution. Sd: Sound. St: Silent.

Association of Scientific Workers, 30 Bedford Row, W.C.1. Scientific Film Committee. *Graded List of Films.* A list of scientific films from many sources, classified and graded for various types of audience. On request. Committee will give advice on programme make-up and choice of films.

Austin Film Library. 24 films of motoring interest, industrial, technical and travel. Available only from the *Educational Films Bureau*, Tring, Herts. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Australian Trade Publicity Film Library. 18 films of Australian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F. 3 sound films on 9.5 mm. available from *Pathescope*.

British Commercial Gas Association, Gas Industry House, 1 Grosvenor Place, S.W.1. Films on social subjects, domestic science, manufacture of gas. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & few St. F.

British Council Film Department, 3 Hanover Street, W.1. *Films of Britain*, 1941. Catalogue for overseas use only but provides useful synopses for 100 sound and silent documentary films.

British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1. (*a*) *National Film Library Loan Section* to stimulate film appreciation by making available copies of film classics. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H. (*b*) *Collection of Educational Films.* The Institute has a small collection of educational films not available from other sources. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

British Instructional Films, 111 Wardour Street, W.1. Feature films; Pathé Gazettes and Pathetones; a good collection of nature films. Catalogue available. 16 mm. Sd. & H.

Canadian-Pacific Film Library. 15 films of Canadian life and scenery. Available from the *Empire Film Library*. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Canadian Government Exhibitions and Publicity. A wide variety of films. Available from the *Empire Film Library*.

Central Council for Health Education. Catalogue of some 250 films, mostly of a specialist health nature, dealing with Diphtheria, Housing, Maternity, Child Welfare, Personal Hygiene, Prevention of Diseases, Physical Fitness, etc. Most films produced by societies affiliated to the Council, or on loan from other 16 mm. distributors (e.g. B.C.G.A.). Six films produced direct for the Council also available, including *Fear and Peter Brown*, *Carry on Children*, and *Breath of Danger*.

35 mm. and 16 mm. Sd. and St. H. and F.

Central Film Library, Imperial Institute, S.W.7. Has absorbed the *Empire Film Library* and the *G.P.O. Film Library*. Also contains all new M.O.I. non-theatrical films. Catalogues available. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Children's Committee of the National Council for British-Soviet Unity, 10 Abbey House, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1. Soviet Sound Films suitable for children. 16 mm. Sid. F. for shows during school hours. H. for other occasions.

Coal Utilisation Joint Council, General Buildings, Aldwych, London, W.C.2. Films on production of British coal and miners' welfare. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Crookes' Laboratories, Gorst Road, Park Royal, N.W.10. *Colloids in Medicine*. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. F.

Dartington Hall Film Unit. Totnes, South Devon. Classroom films on regional and economic geography. 16 mm. St. H.

Dominion of New Zealand Film Library. 415 Strand, W.C.2. 22 films of industry, scenery and sport. Includes several films about the Maoris. 16 mm. St. F.

Educational Films Bureau, Tring, Herts. A selection of all types of film. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Education General Services, 37 Golden Square, W.1. A wide selection of films, particularly of overseas interest. Some prints for sale. 16 mm. & St. H.

Electrical Development Association, 2 Savoy Hill, Strand, W.C.2. Four films of electrical interest. Further films of direct advertising appeal are available to members of the Association only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Empire Film Library. Films primarily of Empire interest, with a useful subject index. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 16 mm. and a few 35 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Filmhire (London) Ltd., 9 Upper Berkeley Street, W.1. Catalogue of 16 mm. Sound films. H.

Ford Film Library, Dagenham, Essex. Some 50 films of travel, engineering, scientific and comedy interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sid. & St. F.

Gaumont-British Equipments, Film House, Wardour Street, W.1. Many films on scientific subjects, geography, hygiene, history, language, natural history, sport. Also feature films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

G.P.O. Film Library. Over 100 films, mostly centred round communications. Now merged with the *Central Film Library*. 35 mm., 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Instructional Screen Ltd., 9 Upper Berkeley Street, W.1. A series of classroom films of English history and the Empire. 16 mm. Sd. St. H. Catalogues available.

Kodak Ltd., Kingsway, W.C.2. Medical Film Library. Circulation restricted to members of medical profession. Some colour films. Some prints for outright sale. 16 mm. St. H.

March of Time, Dean House, 4 Dean Street, W.1. Selected *March of Time* items, including *Britain's R.A.F.*, *India in Crisis*, *G-Men at War*, *Inside Fascist Spain*. 16 mm. Sd. H.

Mathematical Films. Available from B. G. D. Salt, 5 Carlingford Road, Hampstead, N.W.3. Five mathematical films suitable for senior classes. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. St. H.

Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co., Ltd., Trafford Park, Manchester, 17. *Planned Electrification*, a film on the electrification of the winding and surface gear in a coal mine. Available for showing technical and educational groups. 16 mm. Sd. F.

Pathescope, North Circular Road, Cricklewood, N.W.2. Wide selection of silent films, including cartoons, comedies, drama, documentary, travel, sport. Also good selection of early American and German films. 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Petroleum Films Bureau, 15 Hay Hill, Berkeley Square, W.1. Some 25 technical and documentary films. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. F.

Religious Film Library, Church Walk, Dunstable, Beds. Films of religious and temperance appeal. Also list of supporting films from other sources, 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Scottish Central Film Library, 2 Newton Place, Charing Cross, Glasgow, C.3. A wide selection of teaching films from many sources. Contains some silent Scots films not listed elsewhere. Library available to groups in Scotland only. 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Sound-Film Services, 27 Charles Street, Cardiff. Library of selected films including Massingham's *And So to Work*. *Rome* and *Sahara* have French commentaries. 16 mm. Sd. H.

South African Railways Publicity and Travel Bureau, South Africa House, Trafalgar Square, W.C.2. 10 films of travel and general interest. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & 4 St. versions. F.

Southern Railway, General Manager's office Waterloo Station S.E.1. Seven films (one in colour) including *Building an Electric Coach*, *South Africa Fruit* (Southampton Docks to Covent Garden), and films on seaside towns. 16 mm. St. F.

Wallace Heaton, Ltd., 127 New Bond Street W.1. Three catalogues. Sound 16 mm., silent 16 mm., silent 9.5 mm. Sound catalogue contains number of American feature films, including *Thunder Over Mexico*, and some shorts. Silent 16 mm. catalogue contains first-class list of early American, German and Russian features and shorts, 9.5 catalogue has number of early German films and wide selection of early American and English slapstick comedies. 16 mm. & 9.5 mm. Sd. & St. H.

Workers' Film Association, Ltd., Transport House, Smith Square, London, S.W.1. Films of democratic and co-operative interest. Notes and suggestions for complete programmes. Some prints for sale. 35 mm. & 16 mm. Sd. & St. H.

SHENVAL PRESS, LONDON AND HERTFORD

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

No. 4 1944

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LIBERTY FOR WHOM? FOR WHAT?

THE blurred shadow of the post-war world is falling across the sharply defined economic issues of the war. Many a wartime problem of commerce and trade required and received a ruthless solution. Efficiency had to come first. Now there is hope in many quarters, not only that there may be a slackening of wartime restrictions on the freedom of the individual, but that there may also be a return to the supposed benefits of *laissez-faire* in the field of economics. It is assumed that *laissez-faire* and liberty are synonymous.

Liberty for whom? War-time production has been in the interests of the product and the consumer. Is it a real gain to contrive that peace-time production shall be in the interests, not of these, but for the principal benefit of the producer? In distortion of old economic theories *laissez-faire* has come more and more to mean the producer's liberty to make a profit.

These considerations spring to mind following certain bitter excitements which have recently rocked the film trade press of Britain and the U.S.A. It begins in Britain with the Monopoly Report and in the U.S. with a certain alarm affected at what may be the line of development at the National Film Board of Canada. In each case the flesh of readers is required to creep at the prospect of Government intervention in the film industry developing to the point of complete Government control. The careful reader will, of course, discover that the foundation for these fears is non-existent : that no one in Britain seriously believes in the immediate prospect of complete nationalisation, nor does anyone in Canada suppose that a substantial part of Hollywood's studio space is to be taken over and run by the Canadian Government. Yet nothing less than these are the bogeys conjured up.

The intention is, of course, to force the Government out of any connection with the industry by mobilising the public against the imagined threat of nationalisation. One of the British film trade papers appears to have blossomed an Ottawa correspondent largely concerned with carrying on the anti-Government fight, whilst a leading U.S. periodical devotes great space to biassed accounts of the British situation, carefully giving the impression that all sections of the industry are strongly opposed to the recommendations of the Palache Committee in respect of Mr. Rank's monopoly.

Here indeed, in this very distortion, lies the crux of the matter. To what extent is the opposition to any Government activity in the film field an opposition to any attempt to associate the world's film industries with the public interest? To what extent is such opposition felt by any except those vociferous sections of the industry which do not identify their rôle with the public good? It will be found that the people who make films, the people who have a creative function in this creative medium, are not wildly in favour of the liberty of expression alleged to derive from private enterprise and the profit motive.

A great deal of recent attention has been attracted by an American plan designed to establish a closer relationship in the film industry between product and market. At first sight it would appear that the intention is to carry out a survey of public needs with the idea of planning production to satisfy them. What could be better? Closer inspection, however, will show that the plan boils down to a method of preparing the public to receive and welcome the product which the producer wishes to market. The process is not, find the need and create the product, but, find the product and create the need. This high-sounding audience survey is a guide merely to the methods of publicity demanded by the product in hand.

It has long been clear that the public in the cinema gets, not what it wants but what it is given, what it is profitable to give. It takes it and is taught to like it. Publicity has become a trade activity on a level of importance with the actual job of film-making. This is the position under the present set-up and neither Hollywood nor Rank's advisers want it disturbed by Governments stepping in and raising awkward questions about the film as a public service. For they realise that public service *doesn't* mean giving the public what you happen to have piled up on the counter.

So it is that the Ottawa correspondent of *The Cinema* dismisses as "arty" the ambitions of Canadian Citizens' Films Councils in "the proper development and supervision of moving pictures as a medium of visual education and for the creation of influences in the presentation of commercial films". So it is also that the *Motion Picture Herald* objects to a statement that the film industry may be foreseen "assuming the wider responsibilities of a public utility" and objects also to the proposition that "films are an integral part of the new policy toward the public aware that adequate information is the foundation of government by the people". A rumour reported in this periodical that the Provisional Government for the Republic of France proposes to "place the iron hand of absolute Government control" on the French film industry is horror enough to bring a main editorial to a speechless end. As an abiding policy we are primly told this could not square with "liberation".

We welcome that word liberation in reference to the world's film industries. But is it from the "iron hand of absolute Governmental control" that we need to be liberated?

DOCUMENTARY—A NATIONAL ASSET

From the start the documentary film has been concerned with education in the widest sense of the word; that is, with education aimed at producing a thinking, active, result-getting democratic community. Documentary chose film as its medium because film is *par excellence* the popular form of expression of this century (and when television comes it will be basically and inevitably a movie-medium).

The workers in the documentary film movement have therefore been primarily and deeply concerned in public service, since of all public services education is the most essential, if only too often the most neglected. The development of documentary during the present war only took place because of ten years of hard thought and hard work before September 1939, which formed the solid foundations for what has been achieved during the past few years. That achievement represents the establishment, on a permanent basis, of a national service of film education.

We use the phrase "permanent basis" because the organisation of the non-theatrical field is now so large and so well established that there can be no doubt of its permanence. What *may* be questioned, however, is how far the use of this powerful and essential educational weapon will continue to be controlled on democratic lines and fully in the interest of the people of this country.

Today there are three main groups concerned, for one reason or another, with the continuation and development of the educational film field, in which documentary has been, and still is, the key influence. These groups are (1) the State; (2) non-governmental sponsors (e.g. Industry, Commerce, the Co-operatives, etc.), and (3) the film trade.

I. The State

It is well-known that from its first inception documentary has been close-knit with Government, and indeed was nurtured in Government departments. Its basis of public service made this inevitable. But we shall very soon be faced with the long heralded demise of the Ministry of Information, including its Films Division, which among other things controls the nation's own film producing organisation, the Crown Film Unit; controls also the Colonial Film Unit, and has created the Central Film Library, which now supplies programmes of non-theatrical films on the most diverse subjects to an annual audience of over twenty million people. Through the Crown Film Unit, and to a much larger degree by contract to independent producers, the Films Division of the M.O.I. also meets the multifarious film needs of the various Departments of State.

Violent speculation is now taking place as to what is to happen to all these services when the M.O.I. is disbanded; but the general guess is that the nation is too deeply committed to this use of film as a national asset for them to be thrown away. Many people stress the fact that if we found it necessary in the emergency of war so to develop the widespread use of films for purposes of education, information and instruction, then we shall find it even more necessary to continue their development in the period of equal, if not greater, emergency on which, with the imminent defeat of the Axis, we are about to enter.

II. Non-Governmental Sponsors

The sponsorship of documentary films by industrial and commercial interests arose because the more enlightened of them realised that if their own prosperity rises and falls with the rise and fall of the prosperity of the community at large, then their relations to the community must to an increasing extent depend on conceptions of service rather than of suckerdom. Hence the appearance of "public relations" as well as "advertising", and the entry into the educational field by a number of industrial and commercial organisations. The spectacular development of the non-theatrical field in wartime is arousing increasing interest in this form of sponsorship; it is also arousing interest in the potentialities of the film medium as a travelling salesman to be charged with the job of re-establishing our overseas trade.

It seems clear that industrial sponsors will appear in great numbers as soon as the various priorities limiting film production are removed or relaxed. It seems equally clear that the new sponsors will have to learn fast the proper use of the medium; otherwise they will waste a great deal of money on films which attempt direct advertising —a fundamental and costly mistake.

III. The Film Trade

No longer does the Trade as a whole regard non-theatrical films as an irritating if minor menace to box-office receipts. Rather is there a lively interest in the commercial possibilities in this large and still developing field. Producers of short films see themselves partially relieved of the perennial problem of a non-profitable market in the public cinemas; for under the sponsorship system they are independent of distribution risks. Manufacturers of sub-standard apparatus and equipment see in the post-war world of visual education a happy market, with perhaps a sound projector needed in every school, for a start. Others see a fertile field in non-theatrical road-shows in the post-war world.

And with great unanimity the Trade commands the Government to get out of the field, except in certain respects, as for instance in regard to the finance which will enable the rapid equipment of schools with movie apparatus. In fact, there is a strong tendency for the film trade, which for so long alternately opposed and neglected the educational use of film, now to be very anxious to move in on the ground floor laboriously built by others—notably indeed by State and industrial enterprise.

Heaven knows one can only be glad that the Trade now sees the point. In a job so valuable to the nation the more the merrier. But no monopolies please. The film trade as a whole will always (and very properly) be mainly concerned with the entertainment film, and it has no right in the world to demand the sole interest—whether in the name of free enterprise or private profit—in the use of the educational film. It can make—if it will think clearly and with goodwill—an enormous contribution to the educational film field. But let it be remembered that education is something which belongs to the British people as a whole.

What must be sought—what particularly the documentary movement must seek—is the means of identifying the three interests we have just described in the task of post-war visual education. Close collaboration between the State, Industry and the Film Trade is essential.

This journal has frequently stressed the necessity of State enterprise in the field of the educational film; and as a result it has been violently accused of demanding a Government monopoly while opposing a trade (or Rank) monopoly. Once again, with our well-known patience, let us point out that what is needed is not a monopoly, but a system by which the use of film as an educational medium is not separated from the will and wish of the people. The Ministry of Education is the nation's agent for carrying out a hard won policy of compulsory education on democratic lines. Local Education Authorities, equally importantly, are local community agents for the same purpose. Both the Ministry and L.E.A.'s must have active as well as passive powers in all educational matters, films among others. Therefore you cannot deny them the right to engage themselves in films.

This does not mean that you deny to Industry and to the Film Trade an equal right to engage in educational films. The more the merrier. One thing only is an absolute prerequisite, and that is the means of ensuring (*a*) the highest quality in production and projection, and (*b*) a constant, planned output, without idiotic redundancies, of educational films covering *all* educational needs.

The film trade alone, working on a basis of voluntary finance which must re-coup its costs and profits from distribution and exhibition, cannot meet these needs. Many educational films of great importance involve very high production expenditure, but, because of their specialised nature, are shown only to few and often very small audiences. You can't ask a voluntary producer to undertake them; unless, of course, he has attained such a large measure of control of the whole field that he feels, from time to time, and maybe according to personal whim rather than national interest, that he can afford to throw away a few thousands rather in the same way as Hollywood affords to make shorts which are given away with a pound of features.

This country cannot afford to deprive itself of hundreds of educational films because the profit-motive does not reside in them. Nor can it afford an unco-ordinated programme in visual education. For this, if for no other reason, the existing participation of the State in their making and dissemination must continue, And in order to continue, it must have the goodwill and backing, maybe for differing reasons, of the trade as a whole, and of the industrial sponsor.

There are, of course, plenty of other reasons for State participation. Not least of these is the fact that Britain is under the urgent compulsion of finding a new and positive place for herself in the world. We shall publish an article in our next issue which will deal with this particular problem in its historical perspective.

The projection of this country overseas can in part be attained by the export of first-class entertainment films (though this does not mean they must cost £500,000 each); and the British film industry today is achieving an output of essentially British films which is certainly better than ever before. This remains a fact, quite apart from various pressing arguments as to the rightness of the policy being pursued by J. A. Rank.

A Growing Market

But we have other movie contributions to make than in terms of feature films for entertainment purposes. Britain's major gift to world cinema has undoubtedly been the documentary film; and there is a growing market in the non-theatrical field overseas for British documentaries. In the United States alone the showings of British documentaries are already widely and efficiently organised; and there are very few countries to which they are not sent.

Now our documentaries are not despatched overseas for the purpose of making a cash profit. They are sent because it is our national policy to make and send them. During the next few years it is essential that this policy should be an enlightened one, and that it should not reduce itself to a form of national advertising as such. We in Britain have much to give the world in terms of special knowledges and skills and techniques which we have discovered and developed. Giving is the best method of national projection.

Our overseas films should be contributions to the peoples of other countries in terms of activities and problems which today are common to all peoples. Activities and problems which concern agriculture, or machinery, or medicine, or trades union organisation, or nutrition, or any of the thousand and one urgencies which concern the world community today.

In so far as this is a matter of national policy, it is a State concern, for how otherwise can policy be laid down? But here, too, as various public utilities have already proved in practice, is a wide and fertile field for industrial sponsorship. It remains to be seen how far it will be followed, or how far new sponsors will limit themselves to trying to advertise branded goods, or in general to provide background "interest" films of industrial processes. The opportunities are enormous, if sponsors will identify themselves with national policy in this respect.

The brief survey of the situation contained in this article concerns more particularly all workers in the documentary field; for people in documentary must be missionaries as well as film makers.

That some period of confusion will ensue on the defeat of Germany seems inevitable. Equally inevitable is the fact that the documentary movement is on the verge of an even greater expansion than that which took place during the war. For, whatever methods of action may arise from the complex cross-issues and interests we have just discussed, one thing is quite certain, and that is that the wide use of film for education and national projection has come to stay. Only by a defection from duty on the part of the documentary movement can it be seriously endangered, for in that case the medium would be torn to bits or misused—perhaps with the most idealistic motives, perhaps with malice prepense—by groups and interests whose qualifications and intentions do not match the needs.

The time has come for a close re-focussing and centralisation of documentary effort. Clear thinking, a quick political eye, and above all a basic loyalty to the documentary idea have never been more essential to all workers in this field. We must pool our experience, centralise our efforts, and, in a word, continue to act with that unanimity of purpose which not merely made documentary, but has ensured its continuous and successful growth for over fifteen years, and will, if it sticks to its conception of public service, continue to develop it as a national and international asset.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Red Menace in Senate House

Recent criticisms of the Films Division of the M.O.I. appearing in the *Daily Telegraph* seem to have been directed at the wrong target. Indeed the principal faults adduced—of delay in the release of military material, of inadequate coverage by the Services units, of poor British propaganda in neutral countries—these weaknesses seem to have their origin in the Services and in the British Council. As an ex-employee of Films Division the writer of the article must have known where to lay the blame. Tucked away amongst his complaints there is a suggestion that too much Films Division energy has been expended on "Left-wing propaganda pieces", and to allay any curiosity as to which M.O.I. films are held to warrant this description we are assured that the offending productions have never seen the light of day. Perhaps these skeletons in the Films Division cupboard rattle only in the imaginations of ex-employees. In any case we are not sure that a few so-called "Left-wing propaganda pieces" (visible ones) might not have achieved more in elucidation of the British cause and have been of more comfort and encouragement to our armies than the accounts of British military might which the writer calls for.

Art for Terry Ramsaye's Sake

The *Motion Picture Herald*, that journal of the aesthetes, is affronted. Objecting to the "intrusion of political ideologies" in the British reviews of *The White Cliffs of Dover*, M. P. H. concludes that "reactions and comment are nationalistic, rather than artistic". On behalf of the British press we apologise.—O, do with this little island what you will, dread Hollywood. From your Parnassian slopes, where Sinatra and the gentle Abbott gambol, where Costello calls and ever the horrid Karloff lankly pursues, do thou but mould our foibles into the super-special shape of some colossal feature. Visit us with thy art and we obedient to thy servant the ruddy *Motion Picture Herald*, will hearken his trumpet-note knowing that through the voice of Ramsaye the muses speak.

Quota

The Quota Act is due for renewal and a majority of short-film makers are pressing for the insertion of a "cost" clause for shorts. This would enable the Act to assist preferentially those short films on which sufficient money has been expended to permit of good quality. A similar provision for feature films introduced into the expiring Act had the effect of largely eliminating the cheap "quota quickie" and improving the average quality of British films. There seems to be no reasonable argument against a similar measure on behalf of shorts.

C.B.C. Talk on Visit to Normandy and Brittany

By John Grierson

Two Sundays ago I was driving in a jeep from Britanny to a Canadian encampment near Caen. This was the day before the great Canadian breakthrough from Caen toward Falaise. Going south in the morning, we had kept to the main roads through Bayeux, St. Lo, Ville Dieu, Avranches, Pontoison to the very shadow of St. Malo. They were stiff with convoys of trucks and guns and tanks and what seemed a hundred solid miles of armoured might—rumbling like the wrath of God through the gentle countryside to the front. Air Command was complete. The dust of war spread a fine white powder over the apple trees. To-night we were keeping to the country lanes. It was one of these beautiful evenings which everyone who knows France will remember to the end of their days—the old, quiet Normandy of rich cornfields, large cows and large horses, straight scraggy hedges of poplar, elm and willow, quiet ready streams, orchards, soft gray farmyards—and as we sped along, a mere mile or two outside the terrible tide of war, the contrast seemed strange and unreal.

There were the people we used to know, taking their evening walk, *en famille*, dressed in their best Sunday black. The cows were in the fields. The geese marched with stately waddle across the road. An occasional finely-chiselled chateau with its walled garden shot a graceful salute from the 17th century into the evening light. But there was a deep connection, too, between this peaceful scene and the war beyond, for as we passed, each and every group stopped on their way and took off their hats and waved to us frantically, and the children were held high up in their parents' arms and waved too. This jeep of ours, with its great white star, was in its very minor way, a symbol of liberation.

Destruction

That is the dreadful paradox in France to-day. The armies are smashing their way through the French towns and villages, and cannot always take account of the things they must destroy. Caen is in ruins. St. Lo is a pile of rubble. The centre of Avranches has been torn out. The people have lost much. They have lost their relations and their property. In the worst places, they have to build their life again from the very foundations. And yet, as I saw it, their liberation so dearly paid for means more to them than anything else. In the north, amongst the ruins, the reaction is a trifle subdued as in all humanity you might expect. In the south, where the Americans have swept quickly through without so much opposition, the reaction is delirious. It has been so delirious that in many places the people have rushed out to meet the oncoming Americans even before the Germans have gone from the other end of the street, and they have been shot at and killed by the Germans in the very moment of their freedom.

I spoke to many who were sad, but to none who were not eager and friendly. Down in the south they lined the main roads all day long. One had the impression that they felt a compulsion to salute each and every vehicle that passed through. They used the two-fingered sign of La Victoire. Everybody did. And every man that could do so, paraded the old steel helmet of France, as sign and symbol that the warrior spirit of France needed only this occasion to assert itself in its old glory. The name of de Gaulle was on the people's lips, everywhere.

I found these things vastly moving, and so I think did every soldier. There was an air of simple, deep understanding between these common people from different lands, that after all the mistakes and misunderstanding of the past, I never expected to see. Here, some Canadian soldiers were helping an old woman retrieve scraps of bedding and furniture from her ruined home. There, a homesick soldier from the prairies in his time off was giving a peasant a hand with his crops. On a doorstep, and I assure you, not for the cameras, another soldier sat nursing a baby, to remind him of his own, back home. A field kitchen in a farmyard cooked for its troops right alongside a Frenchwoman with an outdoor fire preparing her mid-day meal. A Canadian correspondent sat on the wall of a millstream tapping out something for his newspaper, while a small French boy with puckered forehead looked over the correspondent's shoulder as he typed. Soldiers washed their clothes happily and sang by a hedgerow, while only a hundred yards down the road the women at the village washing-pool chattered and beat their clothes to death in the time-old way. You will not wonder if I bring you back this message from one of the towns I passed through. There the people were kind enough to give me a meal, and I tell you cheerfully that it included a French omelette as big as a house, with local cider to wash it down and a fine de maison. But what was perhaps more wonderful was that in the midst of it a group of local people came to the door. The leader asked was it true that I had just arrived all the way from Canada. I said yes, it was, and he made a speech and everyone applauded and he asked me when I got home I please say: Que les francais aiment bien les Canadiens (that the French are very fond of the Canadians). Before I went to France General Stuart told me that I would be carried away by the spirit of the troops. I found that it is a proud thing to be part of a victorious Army, but a prouder thing still to be part of a liberating Army. We have obviously entered upon something more than a military operation. We have entered upon an international crusade and I only hope we shall forever keep it that way.

War organisation

But this itself could not have come about without the complex organisation which modern war demands. The other most vivid memory I have of France to-day is of the cool, precise preparation and planning at Canadian Headquarters—of the disposition and timing of bombers and fighters, tank brigades and infantry, of the vast supply columns of shells and bombs, oil and food, bridge parts and assault boats, bulldozers, steamrollers, cement mixers and telegraph poles, and a hundred other complicated and crazy gadgets which I knew nothing about. They have made a deep-sea port in the short matter of a week or two from the bare sea-swept beaches on which we landed. Miles of deep water harbourage have appeared by magic, in what must have been one of the most gigantic feats of engineering ever undertaken by the British Navy. The weight of material that pours off the transport ships by day and night is on a scale that defies the imagination. It pours over the roads and occupies in many places every hedgerow and every field. Somewhere there is a master plan, moving it, the men and the machines, to a pattern of action and a time-table of achievement. All I can say, as a layman, is that everything seemed to know where it was going, and was going there fast. . . .

For myself, I come back with the thought of France more dear to me than ever. I have seen a statue to the future of France stand up unharmed from a heap of ruins. I have looked out again from the top of Mont. St. Michel. On the wall beside me a German notice said ACHTUNG, ACHTUNG, THE ENEMY IS LISTENING. It was the last remainder. For the guns were booming over the bay where the citadel of St. Malo was falling, and everywhere I looked from that mighty cathedral, France was French again.

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NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Le Journal de la Résistance.

THIS is the full-length, 40 minute version of the liberation of Paris by the F.F.I., short extracts from which have already appeared in the newsreels. Those who saw the newsreel shots will know what to expect: here is none of the romantic heroism, the pep-talk propaganda, which the film makers have tried to kid us that war consists of. Here is the real thing, hate and brutality, blood and death, all overclouded with that dreamlike air of unreality that always accompanies scenes of excitement, violence and danger. The whole atmosphere is one of savage hatred; Germans going up in flames like human torches as a grenade sets their petrol lorry alight, the wounded young German soldier lying on the ground with bullets spattering round him, and the woman running out to roll his corpse over like a sack of potatoes and get his rifle, the Frenchman lying on the pavement in a bath of his own blood, just beginning to congeal, the women for the umpteenth time in the history of Paris building barricades out of paving stones, or running with stretchers and improvised Red-Cross flags through the flying bullets to pick up the wounded; the prisoners coming in; Germans scared, sullen or just plain oafish; collaborators in a jitter of panic and somehow surprised and hurt that they should be in a situation where they can't change sides again, in the sudden realisation of the mean and cynical that there actually are people who put a cause before their personal comfort. And finally the entry of Leclerc (with his tank-crews of Spanish Republicans) and de Gaulle, and the people going wild with that special fierce joy and patriotism that is part of the French people. Technically, it is a marvel that this stuff was ever shot—where they got their cameras and film stock from I can't imagine—and the cameraman seems seldom out of danger. Some of the hand-held tracking shots are terrific, and add tremendously to the air of tension and excitement of the whole film.

In a way, *Le Journal de la Résistance* is a special tribute to the people of Paris, a people which has always kept its nose firmly in the middle of politics and seized the least opportunity to proclaim its views forcibly. Every Parisian, working or middle class, reserves to himself the right when he doesn't fancy something that's happening, to *descendre dans les rues*. Where the German unemployed flung themselves into rivers, out of windows, or into the S.A., the French went down into the streets and beat up the police. Why, they'd even riot about a film—against *Kameradschaft*, for instance, on the Champs Elysées and for it in the working-class quarters. It's that fierce, active, political spirit that comes out in this film: that spirit has its weaknesses no doubt, but it does at least make sure that Paris frees itself and can decide its own future, without the kind and dampening attentions of allied politicians. That is what makes this a film which everyone must see.

MARCH OF TIME. Racial Problems. No. 2. 10th Year. 17 minutes.

This issue of the *March of Time* deals with the racial and religious differences existing in the U.S.A., and although one welcomes its distribution over here, it would be interesting to know what sort of reception it has had in America, particularly in the South. Bearing in mind the state of feeling among the advocates of "white supremacy" in many of the States, the film seems a pretty courageous effort to state firmly the principle of racial and religious equality.

The actual shooting is not particularly exciting, relying very largely on speeches from various people prominent in civic life—newspaper editors, priests, educationalists and politicians—condemning racial or religious intolerance as contrary to the principles of the American Constitution. It is interesting to find that these advocates are not confined to the Northern States but carry through their propaganda in the areas where hatred and discrimination against the coloured peoples has been most persistent. A strong point is made that there are half a million coloured men and women in the armed services and that it is a grave injustice to deny them the full rights of citizenship while expecting them to shoulder the ultimate responsibility of defending their country with their lives.

Within these terms the film does a good job, but it would have been good to see a wider vista of the colour problem in the American scene. Only a fleeting mention is made, for instance, of the fact that the C.I.O. Unions recognise no colour bar. Even in Detroit there are scores of coloured Trade Union officials, and white and coloured workers work amicably side by side on the same machines. Racial riots are provoked by outside sources. An analysis of some of these factors would have been welcome, but so far as it goes the film will, let us hope, contribute something towards eradicating an evil that all good friends of America abhor.

Left of the Line *Produced* by the British and Canadian Army Film Units. M.O.I. 27 mins.
The film story of D-Day, eagerly awaited by the public, is a satisfactory, if unimaginatively constructed photographic record of the advance of the British and Canadian armies through France and Belgium. The preparations for the invasion and the landings on the Normandy beaches provide exciting material, but the rest seems to be a re-hash of newsreel footage already seen in the cinemas. Either because there wasn't time, or because the producers were too close to it all, the total effect is a little disappointing when compared with the magnitude and excitement of the event itself. It is to be hoped that a more considered and longer document is in preparation, if only for the enlightenment of future generations.

New Builders. Paul Rotha Productions, 1944. *Direction:* Kay Mander. *Photography:* W. Suschitsky. M.O.I. 22 mins.
Subject: The training of boys for the building industry.
Treatment: Boys learning at technical institutes the various jobs connected with building. Plastering, plumbing, carpentry, brick laying, then on an actual job—the building of two farm workers' cottages. On a meadow two men are working with a theodolite, marking out the site and fascinatingly the cottages begin to take shape. This is one of the most perfect sequences that has been in a commentated film for many a day. Foundations, walls, rafters, tiles, plumbing, doors, windows—until at last you want to get up and have a go at it yourself. Finally instructions for boys on how to get into schools or to be apprenticed.

The film's job is to influence boys to take up building as a job and it is completely successful. It shows the craftsmanship of building as important and satisfying work, and will give any boy an honest and practical start.
Propaganda Value: Excellent.

A Farm is Reclaimed. *Production:* Campbell-Harper. *Direction:* Alan Harper. Made for the Scottish Department of Agriculture. Non-T. M.O.I. 15 mins.
Subject: Ploughing up of a derelict Scottish farm.
Treatment This is a simply made film with a pleasantly naïve quality about it. A farmer takes on a tough assignment in the shape of a 200-odd acre farm where no work seems to have been done for years. The buildings are falling to pieces, the house is uninhabitable, the fences are down, and the land has been let go for rough grazing. However, with the help and advice of the War Agricultural Executive Committee and the use of a lot of complicated and expensive machinery, the land is all ploughed up—the valley fields for cereals, the hill fields re-seeded for sheep and cattle. It all costs a lot of money, but what with Government grants, subsidised prices, etc., the farmer finally can see a nice profit in it. The film shows most of what you want to see in the way of the work done, the commentary is nicely calculated and there's a good human feeling about the farmer and W.E.A.C. members. It's only when it's all over that you realise that you have seen nothing of the people who have done all the work, that the farmer, since the farmhouse was uninhabitable, must have lived in town and travelled out by car, and that the necessity to present farming as a sound business proposition shows very clearly what a fundamental revolution is necessary in country life.
Propaganda Value: Very good for Scottish farmers.

Some Like it Rough. Public Relationship Films. *Production:* Lewis Grant Wallace. *Direction:* Dr. Massingham. M.O.I. 16 mins.
Humorous treatment is not a strong point with most M.O.I. films, and whoever thought up this one had a bright idea which Massingham has put over very neatly. An American soldier meets up with an English soldier and tells him that American football is "murder". The Englishman advances the view that it is no tougher than the English game and is promptly challenged to have a try at it, with disastrous results to his own person. To get his own back he lures the American into a game of Rugger. After being chucked all over the field by a bunch of hearty toughs, the Yank decides that maybe the Englishman is right.

The story, simple enough, depends entirely on its treatment for effect. The whole thing is played in a sort of early René Clair style, including a black-coated undertaker solemnly handing out his cards to the stretcher cases as they are carried off the field. John Sweet (of *Canterbury Tale*) plays the Yank in his artless, engaging manner, the sound track shows much originality, the football games are shot with terrific gusto and although the propaganda message, if any, is obscure, the whole thing adds up to a friendly, jolly film which can't possibly offend anybody.

(*continued overleaf*)

Two Views on "Our Country"

Our Country. *Production:* Strand for M.O.I. *Direction:* John Eldridge. *Photography:* Jo Jago. *Music:* William Alwyn. Specialised commercial. 50 minutes.

Subject: A lyrical look at the face of war-time Britain.

Treatment: This film wanders gracefully, if somewhat nebulously, from the ships of Liverpool, through the bombed streets of London, the apple orchards, hopfields and airfields of Kent, the mining valleys of South Wales and the steelworks of Sheffield, up to the West Indian lumber camps in Scotland, to finish round a bottle of rum in the cabin of a trawler tied up at Point Law, Aberdeen. The different sections are held loosely together by a merchant seaman (David Sime), who travels from one place to the other on his tour of inspection on foot, by lorry, by car, by train, with his kitbag slung over his shoulder and a ready welcome waiting for him everywhere. He joins the apple and hop-pickers in Kent, gets an invitation to a harvest supper, watches the Welsh miners sing, picks up a girl in Sheffield, rides on a train with the engine driver, jitterbugs with the lads from Honduras and boozes with the trawlermen of Aberdeen, all in an atmosphere of almost painfully perfect friendliness. The whole film is exquisitely shot and, in particular, beautifully photographed—not so much the conventional over-filtered landscapes and cloud effects as the natural, effective low-key scenes as the seaman wanders around St. Paul's or the railway station. And there are many pleasant incidents—the tough dame in the hopfields darning his sock, the vicious-looking Welsh schoolmaster with his temporarily unterrorised class, and, best of all, the firm masculine ring and bite of the Welsh miners singing. But of its very nature and approach the film suffers from vagueness and woolliness. It has one of those "poetic" commentaries (the style of the whole film is impressionistic) which pound on and on with very little relation to what the picture's doing—like somebody determined to finish a funny story in spite of the fact that all the company is busily engaged on something else—and which I'd sincerely hoped we'd seen the last of; and, for once, Bill Alwyn's music is disappointing. The director has, I think, concentrated on trying to give an impression of good looks, and of a natural unforced "Christian" friendliness, which no doubt he finds the most pleasant characteristic of British life, and in that he has in a large measure succeeded. It is a pity that this air of well-meaning friendliness should carry, like the vicar's fixed smile at the village fete, such an effect of coldness and gutlessness. I should have thought the warmth and strength of those Welsh miners or the toughness of that Welsh schoolmaster were the British qualities to-day more in need of exploration for ourselves and of presentation for the world. But that is not to deny that this is a very good-looking and well-made film.

Propaganda Value: Good prestige among the artistically inclined.

* * *

THE stress and urgencies of war do not make for experiments in technique. For the past five years documentary has been developing the various shapes and formulæ which were evolved during the Thirties, and which were, in 1939, so diverse that they formed first-class foundations for the period of rapid expansion which has since taken place. Documentary has in no sense been marking time. But new methods have, in general, been forced to await a period of somewhat different atmosphere. It is a likely guess that such a period, whose prerequisite is not so much leisure as a definite mood which war usually damps, is about to open.

Highly significant therefore is *Our Country*, which is, as far as I know, the sole and successful experimental film of the war period. It says important things in a new way. And because this new way involves poetry, impressionism, and in general a lyrical approach, the film may, perhaps, be a source of controversy and perhaps heart-searching amongst documentary workers who have for so long had their noses pressed against the war-time grindstone.

Now it would be absurd to urge everyone in documentary to make films like *Our Country*. In the first place John Eldridge is the only person who can; and in the second place it is a film which is important in itself, for what it is; and that is the sort of film which documentary ought to produce at least once in every five years.

Our Country says a great deal about Britain, and says it with deep emotion. It uses film-continuity in a specially exciting manner, and one which it has always been difficult to bring off; for it involves an absolute logic arising not from a definite story, but from a flow of visuals and sounds (Alwyn's score is his best so far) which achieve logicality because they are purely and simply film. You can't translate the plot of *Our Country* on to paper; it doesn't belong on paper, only on celluloid. You can do no more than say that the film is about a sailor who comes ashore in wartime and participates, as a visitor from another world, in the lives and work, fears and happinesses of men and women and children everywhere in these Islands. You may add, if you like, that there is a prologue by an American soldier; add to that there is a girl who is there because she is your girl or mine (and therefore in this film, the sailor's—watch please the lovely reversed continuity by which Eldridge gets this point across, thus achieving universality without making a dreary "symbolic woman" at the same time).

For fifty minutes this waking dream, or rather this live vision of the inwardness of our daily life, evokes both thoughts and emotions which you cannot find other than valid. By rights it should be noticeably episodic, but it is not; indeed it is so much the reverse that after it is over you feel that everything has been superimposed on everything—and yet every single facet is in itself as clear as crystal.

It would be idiotic to claim perfection. There are things wrong in the film—patches of commentary which are a mere combination of hurriedly spoken words, and which stand out all the more alarmingly amongst the long stretches in which Dylan Thomas succeeds for the first time in wedding (and subordinating) his style to the needs of the medium. There are some unnecessary repetitions of mood, and, thereby, of type-visuals.

But in general the film achieves a genuine integrity, of æsthetic and sentiment (in the proper use of that misused word); and it is an object lesson in inspired shooting. Eldridge has developed his technique slowly, and obviously with much pain and grief, but here he comes out on top, with an ability to portray the most trivial gestures and sights of our daily life with an insight and affection which move us because they are not tricks, but truth. What he does next will be of prime interest to documentary. He cannot repeat himself, because *Our Country* is of itself, and inimitable; but his personal approach to our medium is bound to bring documentary something it needs.

Summer Film School, St. Andrews

At St. Andrews in August, the Scottish Youth Leadership Training Association sponsored a week's residential film school. Its aim was to instruct youth leaders in the use of film for the benefit of youth organisations. The school had the co-operation of the Scottish Educational Film Association, the Scottish Film Council, the Fife Education Authority and the cinema trade in the provision of lecturers and of equipment and accommodation. Miss Isabel Sinclair, the Scottish film critic gave talks, one of them on Film Appreciation.

The students, who numbered 25, were instructed in the use of projectors and equipment, viewed a number of documentary and other films and listened to a variety of talks covering such subjects as the construction of the film story, the teamwork of the film production unit and the use that could be made of the commercial cinema.

Movie Parade

By John Huntly

)ARTY, Atten—shun!" A hundred R.A.F. trainees stand before a large drab hall ıarked Station Cinema. It has a small foyer, a ay box, and a few stills on the walls, but otherise it is no different from the rest of the uildings.

"Stand at Ease!" A burly navigator-to-be oints to a photo of to-night's show and raises n up-turned thumb to his pal. It is Betty Grable; *'oney Island* is on.

"Lead in, the front file." A wireless operator is reparing for a sleep. An L.A.C. with the dirty ap badge thinks these information things are a ead loss; he says so.

"Follow on, the remainder." A flight mechanic ıought the one about the shipyards last week 'as pretty good. His "oppo." thinks these civvies et too much money.

"Cut out the smoking; this is a parade!" The ergeant considers this cinema business is a good ıcket; he will probably be able to nip back to ıe mess for a natter with the new Warrant fficer.

In the projection room a fellow who used to ork at the Odeon is threading up. Bit of a bind, ıese afternoon shows, especially with to-night's :ature not checked yet. Blinking Yanks, too; ope that join in the second reel holds out. All ıe boys settled now. House lights—motor on—urtain—picture—sound; he looks out through ıe glass port hole.

The cinema is plain with distempered walls (a ort of light colour) and harsh white lamps in a ılse ceiling. The wooden floor slopes back and ıe seats are tip-ups. Fair sized stage, a few oloured lights and a decent curtain; the place 'as once a hangar.

The American Scene . . . I. Swedes in America. he speakers blare forth music; the sound quality good. "Who cares about bloody Swedes", says n A.C.2. A shot of Ingrid Bergman appears, elling us what the Swedes are doing in America. She's a wizard girl," says a Pilot who has now ome off "ops", "I saw her in *Casablanca*."

In his home in Los Angeles, a director can nile, for he was right. Getting Miss Bergman) do that commentary assured the audience's ttention.

In the factory, in the Army, at home, at a ance, in the shops; we know what the Swedes ook like in America. We also see that they are a emocratic people whose ideas are well suited to ıe American way of life. Miss Bergman bids us ırewell. "Tame," says an apprentice fitter.

What So Proudly We Hail . . . "Made for ieneral Motors Ltd. by Sound Masters, Inc." hades of the Gas Industry! The Yanks have eard about John Grierson and don't see why ıey shouldn't do it as well. Here is a good picıre of an American family and the boys sit quiet nd absorb the factory and mother and the kids nd . . .

"I knew that blasted join wouldn't hold" says ıe operator. Howls and whistles from the boys. ver the sprocket, through the gate, over the procket, into the sound, over the sprocket . . . lore howls and whistles.

". . . is the automobile factory where he puts in 5 day week . . ." On we go. "Not bad, that" is ıe verdict. "Too much flagwagging as usual" says a regular moviegoer. "Another of those *March of Time* commentaries" says another.

Next comes *The Home Place* made by some American Agriculture Department. It is a tedious catalogue of American farms and houses and everyone is bored. You can tell by the restlessness.

Common Cause by Verity Films. This is not Americans, but everyone. The cutting is clever and it gets its point across with a real sting. This is the stuff to give the troops, but those forced speeches always want watching.

Finally, pure instruction from *Beware, Butterfly Bomb About.* "Grim things, them bombs" . . . "I wondered what the b—— looked like" . . . "Not for me" . . . and so on. Everyone was deeply impressed. The attention to detail made the reconstruction real, the production made it clear, the direction gave it a punch.

House lights, a rumble increasing to a roar as a hundred springs reassert their seats to the retracted position, and the boys file out into the sunlight. They have all learnt something (except those two who slept right from the start—been on the beer last night).

Swedes in America was quite competent but it was too national and rather unimportant. *What So Proudly* was national as well, but it was treated with neat intimacy and aroused interest by "how the other side lives" angles. *Common Cause* was wide enough in scope but again the personal touch scored. Service audiences are also very appreciative of those little intimate details that make good documentary.

Nothing is more fatal than the catalogue type of travelogue. *The Home Place* was a grim example, but loads of these travelogues make the same mistake. Photos in a book or lantern slides can give a catalogue of views and buildings.

Perhaps after all the best use of the educational film lies in *Butterfly Bomb.* The educationals that spring to my mind are always *The New Fire Bomb*, Arthur Askey showing how not to sneeze, or watching a four-stroke engine in action. But then facts are more obvious than ideas, and *Common Cause* may have instilled a subconscious lesson equally as strong as *Butterfly Bomb.*

At the larger camps, the cinema parades are gradually becoming organised, but a tremendous amount of improvement is still needed in the use of the 16mm. projectors. Here breakdowns are a regular occurrence and presentation often unimaginative. However the value of the film for the general education of the forces, along with discussion groups and information centres, speaks for itself. Service personnel always jump at a visit to the cinema in or out of working hours and with good material now coming from the studios the position of the educational film is slowly becoming stabilised.

"Party, atten—shun! To the right—Dismiss!"

New Soviet Films By Oleg Leonidov

by permission of Soviet War News

SCIENTIFIC and educational films constitute one of the most essential branches of Soviet cinematography, and aim to popularise and clarify scientific problems for students and schoolchildren. Such films have been extensively used in wartime as a medium of military training. They also serve a useful function in the army medical services. The screen shows major operations, newly-discovered methods of treating wounds, post-thesis, etc., which aid young doctors at the front to widen their scope of knowledge, to gain greater skill, and to restore the maximum number of wounded to the fighting ranks.

Two hundred titles of technical-educational films are released annually in the U.S.S.R. Among others there are pictures on the use of trophy arms, on tank and sapper troops, on "Modern Medicine in the Patriotic War", "Injuries to the Skull and Brain," "Plaster Casts," "Physiotherapy," "War Medicine on the Western Front," A.R.P. training of the civil population.

A series of educational films have been made especially for railway workers, under the auspices of the Cinema-Lecture Bureau of the Central Administration of the Educational Institutions of the People's Commissariat of Railways. The motion pictures, accompanied by lectures, may be seen at goods stations, in locomotive depot laboratories, and railway workshops.

Many young people came to work on the railways during the war, and it was vitally important to improve their technical skill. In 1943 at one Moscow railway junction alone, over 500,000 people attended shows of educational films accompanied by lectures. Switchmen and signallers saw the whole switch and signalling system; railway conductors got an idea of the cars, young engineers were shown the intricacies of the locomotive. There are films on the economy of fuel, on railway maintenance, on methods of speedy restoration of lines in liberated districts. Mobile cinemas with these films follow in the wake of the advancing troops of the Red Army.

In addition to educational-scientific motion pictures "Glavetkhfilm" (Central Technical Films Administration) Studios are producing a number of so-called popular science shorts. They include, for example, *Stage Stars, White Fang* by Jack London, *Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov*, and others. In *Stage Stars* produced by Valdimir Yurenev, the spectator will see the foremost actors of the Moscow Art Theatre working on a new production.

The film on the Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov will be of exceptional interest. It will give extracts from the most popular of his operas, performed by the best orchestras and singers in the U.S.S.R. in theatres of the multi-national peoples of the Soviet Union, in their native languages—Georgian, Kazakh, Russian, Tajik, Armenian and Ukrainian. The film is being produced by order of the Soviet government in connection with the recent centenary of the composer's birth. One of Rimsky-Korsakov's favourite pupils and followers, Boris Asafiev, composer and music critic, will collaborate in its production.

Technical films have become very popular with Soviet audiences, and have received a high praise from the Government, which attributes great cultural value to this field of cinematography. Thus, *The Depths of the Sea*, and *The Force of Life*, produced by Alexander Zguridi, and cameramen Mikhail Piskunov and Gleb Troyansky, with the scientific advice of Professor Vladimir Lebedev and Peter Manteifel, were awarded Stalin Prizes. The central studios of educational-technical military films which during the war released a large number of these films on almost all branches of military science, were awarded the Order of the Red Star.

RÔLE OF THE "SHORTS"

WHAT rôle should the "short" play in the film society programme? Even when it meets the requirement of quality, it should not be merely something which fills out the programme to the desired running-time. A film society should have at least two reasons for showing a short: its demonstration of some advance in technique or experiment in subject-matter; and the complementary contribution it makes to the interest of the other films in the programme.

Programmes composed to a theme, once a revolutionary experiment, are now included in most film society seasons. There are several bases for choosing the films: technique, origin, content, period of production. As an example of the first, the use of music in films may be illustrated. Such a programme was given by the Ayrshire Film Society this season when it showed, with *Battle for Music*, *Troopship* (Richard Addinsell), *Paderewski*, and *Malta, G.C.* (Sir Arnold Bax). Other technique programmes are possible on colour, sound, décor, and the camera. For a programme on the camera I recommend societies to watch for a Columbia film, *Address Unknown*, in which the combination of William Cameron Menzies and Rudolph Maté produces an acutely picture-conscious treatment.

Films grouped under their country of origin normally offer little difficulty and it is one of the societies' duties to illustrate cinema achievement in other countries. During the war, however, this has not been possible except for America and Russia. The U.S.O.W.I. is bringing into the country a steady flow of films which make an American programme easy to compile. Among the latest films to arrive is *The Valley of the Tennessee* an illuminating account of the T.V.A. experiment, with something of the dramatic power of *The River*. The arrangement of a Russian programme is greatly facilitated by *The Russian Story* which, with its excerpts from most of the outstanding Soviet films, does with ease in an hour or so what some film societies have previously laboured earnestly and unsuccessfully to do. If any society south of the Border is considering a Scottish programme, the new Scottish shorts (*Power for the Highlands*, *Highland Doctor*, *Crofters*, and the widely-praised *Children of the City*) make possible an attractive programme, with perhaps a revival of Michael Powell's *Edge of the World*.

Programmes based on content can have a wide and fascinating variety. For example, the London Film Institute Society opened its season with an unusual programme of crime films, in which *Children of the City* and a reel from *Blackmail* preceded Fritz Lang's *M*. I should like to see a programme on comedy with, perhaps, short pieces by Laurel and Hardy and W. C. Fields shown with a reel from a Marx Brothers film and *The Gold Rush*. Period programmes which carry the audience ten, fifteen, twenty years back in film time, can also be fascinating and revealing. A programme with *The Blue Angel* was a notable success in Edinburgh last season, and a similar programme, dipping further back in film history —the period of *The Last Laugh*—is being considered.

I find that, although there is no lack of short films of interest to film societies, news of their existence sometimes fails to reach those who would find it most useful. One of the reasons for this is that shorts are so rarely seen by the film critics; and even when they are seen, there is little space available to comment on them.

Among the new M. of I. films which societies should consider for their programmes are *The Grassy Shires*, first of the "Pattern of Britain." series; *Cotswold Club*, the story of a Village Produce Association; *The New Crop*, on timber and re-afforestation; *A Start in Life*, on health services for children; *Atlantic Trawler*, an impression of trawlermen at war; and *Night Flight*, a study of map-reading as an aid to navigation. These are in addition to the Scottish films mentioned above. It is probably a prejudiced viewpoint, but I consider *Crofters* the most beautifully photographed film of the war.

Of the British Council's films, produced primarily for showing abroad, there is a number which should interest film societies. *The New Mine* is an account of the new methods in use at the Comrie Colliery in Fife. *Cambridge* effectively conveys the town's architectural character and includes glimpses of the famous men who teach there. *Teeth of Steel*, in impressive technicolor, illustrates the work of giant excavators; it is to be followed by a more ambitious film in colour on the production of steel. *Accident Service* is a medical film in the tradition of the Council's successful *Surgery in Chest Diseases*.

There have been several recent additions to the "World in Action" series, produced in Canada by Stuart Legg under John Grierson's supervision. These include *War for Men's Minds*, on propaganda; *Labour Front*, on world manpower problems; and *Global Air Routes*, a stimulating discussion on international aviation.

In conclusion, one or two unrelated impressions: the improving quality of M.G.M. colour cartoons, *cf. Dumb-Hounded;* the liveliness of Georg Pal's work for Paramount; and the return to form of Robert Benchley, in, for example, *No News is Good News*.

H. FORSYTH HARDY

Film Societies

Edinburgh Film Guild opened its season with *Toscanini* and Duvivier's *The Heart of a Nation*. The second programme was *Circonstances Atténuantes* and *The Battle of Russia* and films announced include *The Childhood of Maxim Gorki*, *Strange Incident*, *Le Jour se Lève*, *Welcome to Britain*, and *Un Carnet de Bal*. A feature is to be made of Frank Capra's war films, shown in special programmes with British documentaries of the equivalent period. Last season's membership record has been broken and the roll has had to be closed.

Manchester and Salford Film Society has shown *Jacob Sverdlov* and *The Magnificent Ambersons*. *Men of Rochdale* and *Derrière la Façade* are announced. A Film Forum to express and discuss viewpoints on the cinema has been held monthly in the British Council rooms.

Dundee Film Society has decided to place a limit this year on its steadily growing membership. The season opened with the unusual American film, *The Remarkable Andrew*. *Un Carnet de Bal* is to be revived.

Film Society of Ayrshire followed its opening programme on music with *Le Dernier Tournant*. Performances will be held this season in Ayr only.

Aberdeen Film Society showed *Education de Prince* at its opening performance. The Capra war films will be included in later programmes.

The "Cinemette"

By Richard Delaney

The potentialities of 16mm. film must hearten everyone who prefers something more stimulating mentally than the novelette, and has despaired of ever seeing it in any quantity on the screen. In a suggestive article in a recent issue of Documentary News Letter, Arthur Elton writes of the extensive place 16mm. films will have in the post-war cinema. Soon after the war, he says, everyone who can afford to buy a portable typewriter will find a mass-produced film camera within his means. This will result in the appearance of parish magazines, learned periodicals, local papers, minority pamphlets, and all the other commonplaces of literature and free speech. The article, which is entitled "Film Grammar", warns us of the danger of poor production in these films, and suggests as a preventative, courses of film making in schools. Though primarily concerned about technique, Mr. Elton does in passing suggest some of the important uses to which 16mm. film will be put. What we shall see on this gauge and where we shall see it, is a fascinating subject that deserves more detailed consideration. I should like therefore to develop a line of thought engendered by reading "Film Grammar", and predict an innovation which we can look forward to with particular certainty in the cinema of the future. This is the cinemette. (I could equally aptly have called it "little cinema"; but for euphony and brevity, I prefer "cinemette".)

Physically, the cinemette will be like an ordinary cinema, except that it will be much smaller and will be equipped for 16mm. sound projection. In every other way, and above all in what is exhibited, it will differ completely from its commercial parent. What it will resemble most is the learned periodical mentioned in the article quoted above. The programme will consist of short films, each averaging half an hour in length. These will have been selected by the editor-manager from the many contributions sent in by amateur producers. Programmes need not be confined to brand-new work by amateurs. "Penguin New Writing," ostensibly for new writers, always includes in its pages contributions from established authors. There is plenty of fine documentary and cartoon material in existence from which the editor-manager can draw to spice his bill of contents. Accepted films will be paid for, and will be screened daily for a fortnight; and later, as the supply increases, for a week only. Outstanding films will be listed by a central agency, which will make them available for other cinemettes. Films may also be sent direct to this agency for trade screening. The customary booking would then ensure.

Different houses will specialise in different fare. We shall inevitably have exhibitors showing films of little or no integrity, either in subject or treatment. This need not discourage us. The literary world is never free from publications at this level; yet at its best it constitutes an inspiring example to its sister arts, the theatre and the cinema. One editor-manager will become known for the seriousness and catholicity of his selections. His cinemette may become a miniature screen counterpart of Pelican Books. Another may present a movie *New Statesman*, interpreting and discussing the more complicated of our dealings with one another. We shall see, too,

(*continued overleaf*)

The "Cinemette" (*continued*)

as Mr. Elton suggests, the reflection of local activity in provincial journals and parish magazines. In fact, it may be confidently predicted that almost every pursuit of man that is at present served by a periodical, will be catered for on the screen.

Though this new arm of the cinema will have rent, maintenance and contributors to pay, it cannot be classed as commercial—for the single essential reason that its production will not be geared to the lowest common denominator of public intelligence. It will be free to attempt without interference—indeed with encouragement—high levels in technique and in material. In the latter, at any rate, it will shame its prostitute parent into reforming herself a little. Box-office competition will soon awaken the interest of Hollywood and her imitators. Will the cinemette be good box-office? Consider the thousands of people who comprise the membership of film societies; go to the theatre; belong to progressive organisations; read good books; in short, who aspire to independent thinking. Surely there will be found among these more than sufficient to build a steady clientele for the cinemette.

It is a platitude now to repeat the great benefit man has derived from the printed word. His debt to the photograph is usually underestimated; but it is, comparatively speaking, almost as great.

Letter from Pudovkin

(*by kind permission of Roger Burford*)

DEAR MR. BURFORD,

I am very glad to see that you are really in earnest about acquainting us with the various schools of British documentary films. I shall certainly make a point of seeing all the films you have mentioned at the Cinema Committee, and to have Eisenstein and Gerasimov join me in this. We shall arrange for a showing of the scientific films just as soon as you send them to VOKS. If you will only furnish me with the necessary material, I undertake to acquaint our Section with the productions of the leading British documentary directors. I could illustrate my report with certain of the films. When do you expect to receive *The Way Ahead*? To judge by the reviews, this film ought to be particularly interesting to us. The remark that "the film is based on an idea, and nothing but an idea" as contrasted with "a 'vehicle' for some contract star" makes me very impatient to see it. Its theme—"How, in time of war, an individual becomes a member of a corporate body" also promises to be interesting. And when I read the following words about the cast: "Bless their hearts, I had forgotten they were actors"—I was all the more convinced that this must be a significant and serious piece of work. Thank you very much for the book and for your kind attention to my interests other than those in cinema art.

I also enjoyed reading the reviews you sent.

Once more, I shall be waiting impatiently for your material on the leading schools of British documentary directors.

Yours sincerely,

V. PUDOVKIN

Memphis Belle

By S/Sgt. James F. Scanlan

HIGH over Germany one fall morning in 1942, a squadron of Fortresses tightened their formation for the bombing run. In the lead ship, Major William Clothier slipped the filters on his camera. The altitude was 28,000 ft. Flakes of snow and ice clouded the windows. The temperature was 65 degrees below zero. Cold had frozen every gun in the Fort. From the side, a Junkers 88 pursuit made a quick pass at the waist position. Clothier aimed his camera, caught a few seconds of the attack. Then his camera went dead: it was frozen.

The Fort was committed to her bombing run. As the seconds preceding the bomb dropping slipped by, Clothier, with the aid of the radio operator, moved his camera forward. The bomb-bay doors opened. Clothier fumbled with the camera, finally made it work. The bombs dropped. Clothier shot several hundred feet. Then the camera went completely dead.

When the Forts had cleared the target, Vegesack, Germany, had been bombed for the first time. Of greater significances to Air Forces cameramen, however, was the fact that Clothier had taken the first aerial motion pictures of a bombing attack in this war. The meagre footage he obtained on that first mission was the beginning of over 16,000 feet shot during the succeeding months and later edited into the War Department film *Memphis Belle*.

At the request of Lt.-Col. William Wyler, Clothier had left R.K.O. Studios to make a photographic record of the fledgling Eighth Air Force. Departing for England with him was Lt. Harold Tannenbaum, R.K.O. sound-man. When the crew left for overseas, they were the first Army Air Forces combat camera unit to be sent into action.

A veteran of the last war, Tannenbaum was 47 and above Selective Service age, but again volunteered for combat duty. When the crew arrived in England, they found that their equipment had been sunk on a merchant ship in the Atlantic. Clothier and Wyler finally succeeded in borrowing a complete set of equipment, except sound, from Lt.-Comdr. John Ford, of the Navy. Then they started work on *Memphis Belle*.

Tannenbaum, having no sound equipment, volunteered for aerial combat duty. After receiving camera instructions from Clothier, he accompanied the Fortresses on their raids over France. On one of these missions, his Fortress was shot down over St. Nazaire. Tannenbaum was the first A.A.E. motion picture cameraman to be reported missing in this war.

To obtain combat shots of fighter attacks and the colour sequences now contained in *Memphis Belle*, Clothier made three flights over enemy territory. Wyler also accompanied the bombers and was awarded the air medal.

When he had secured enough combat footage, Clothier photographed activities at the air bases, including work of the ground crews, briefings, and each step in the preparing for the missions. He later photographed the decoration ceremonies for the crew of the *Memphis Belle*, and the visit of the King and Queen of England.

At the completion of this mission, Wyler and Clothier returned to the 1st Motion Picture Unit in Culver City. Wyler started work on the editing, dubbing and narration of the film. *Memphis Belle* was completed at the 1st Motion Picture Unit and then released by Paramount Pictures Inc. under the auspices of the Office of War Information through the War Activities Committee, Motion Picture Industries.

The cutting was completed by S./Sgt. Eric L. Harrison; narration was written by T./Sgt. Lester Koenig, and spoken by Eugene Kern an Cpl. John Beal. For this work, the 1st Mot Picture Unit was later commended by the H quarters Army Air Forces in a letter wh stated:

"1. A motion picture now entitled *Memphis Belle* was recently completed for the Army Air Forces. The personnel of your command extended valuable co-operation in the writing of the narration, assembling and editing, musical scoring and recording, sound effects, cutting, animation and dubbing of the film.

"2. It is believed that the tireless effort and devotion to duty on the part of members of your organisation is reflected in the outstanding merit of the film."

After pioneering the field of aerial motion picture combat photography, Clothier trained a complete combat camera unit at the 1st Motion Picture Unit and then returned to England. Since his first flight over Vegesack, the 1st Motion Picture Unit has sent similar Combat Camera Units to every theatre of operations. They have covered targets in every theatre of the war, and completion of more pictures similar to *Memphis Belle* is now under way.

Correspondence

DEAR SIR,

While I consider that Mr. Forsyth Hardy has given excellent advice to Film Societies (D.N.L. Vol. V, Nos. 2 and 3), I doubt if he has gone far enough into their functions as an advance guard. It is part of the problem of Film Societies that a number of the members would like to make films but have never bothered to do anything much about it, and that this negative attitude characterises a great many of the activities of Film Societies. The members are pleased to have good programmes and will put up with limited inconvenience but they do not want to do anything more positive. In Birmingham, only two or three per cent of a large and financially sound Film Society ever bothered to come to discussion meetings, and when it became difficult to get cinema space only this small isolated intellectual clique was left. The society temporarily closed down.

Film Societies need to be more than a convenience; they need a policy as well as film shows if they are to justify their existence and become an advance guard. Their members should be people who genuinely care about films and are prepared to take on some responsibility towards them. This is not an easy policy to put across, because it is in the nature of films that audiences accept even utter rubbish with the mildest of grumbles.

But, as Mr. Forsyth Hardy said, a Film Society is not doing its job unless its activities generally are helping to further the development of the film medium. And this development is not only linked with technical research or æsthetics, it is deeply concerned with audiences and box-office receipts, with methods of film production and the availability of facilities for making films. Therefore all Film Societies must consider the Report on Monopoly Tendencies in the Film Industry, to discover how monopoly affects both film production generally and the showing and distribution of films in their local area. They should follow this up by inquiring if their Member of Parliament intends to take action, and if necessary they should agitate locally for better distribution of films.

Film Societies should find out how the Ministry of Information film shows are working and developing, so that their members can be informed of this valuable activity. Popular support can help to guard and develop this vital use of films.

Equally important is a full knowledge of the rôle of the Central Film Library and an appreciation of the part that a free, State-controlled, film library can play in developing films, particularly educational films, and in keeping their production on relatively democratic lines.

In several cities the local authorities are considering the production of civic films. Film Societies can campaign to show and explain, to town and council, the part films can play in replanning our cities, in increasing civic responsibility and combating prejudice and ignorance. They should consider it part of their work to see that these are good films, made by the best possible technicians. Similarly they might interest themselves in the wider use of educational and scientific films. These activities, and the building of programmes, can be helped by joining the Scientific Film Association.

BILL MASON

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

CONTENTS

VOL. 5 NO. 6 Forty-seventh Issue — PUBLISHED BY FILM CENTRE, 34 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON W.1 — ONE SHILLING

FILM RELATIONS WITH AMERICA

IT is widely accepted that Anglo-American relations are not so good as they should be. Why is this? In our opinion the reasons are numerous but individually petty and of a kind which will respond to the healing efforts of the propagandist. There is no antagonism between the two countries which cannot be removed by a fuller understanding.

It is in the providing of this understanding that we submit with all respect that America has failed. Her propaganda has failed to present a conception of America which the European peoples can whole-heartedly welcome. No doubt there are concrete political and economic differences which may prove obstinate but these can be removed given a basis of sympathetic understanding.

No one will question the fact that the screen is the principal channel of communication between the peoples of America and the peoples of Europe and it is this channel which in our opinion is failing to present a picture of America which will bring understanding. We refer of course largely to the feature film. Too few American documentaries are exported to influence the great mass of cinema-goers—although, as we shall suggest later in this article, there may well be a partial solution to the present problem in an increase in the production and distribution of the American film of fact. Meanwhile American feature films are building up a conception of America in the minds of the European public which is false and damaging. Is it to be wondered that many British cinema-goers see America as a place of luxury and shallow sentiment? Whatever the immediate and ephemeral entertainment value, we believe that the crocodile tears shed in so many American war films, the hysterical abandon of the American family when it sees itself even mildly threatened by war, can arouse only astonishment and something close to contempt amongst audiences who have come to regard the deprivations of war as a daily commonplace. We do not hesitate to use such frank language because we know that the lath and plaster epics of the American home front completely misrepresent the truth about America. Rather do they represent a sickly-sweet commodity prepared solely for commercial profit, and with an irresponsible lack of attention to the deeper psychological values. Even their makers would resent the suggestion that they are attempting to present reality. But what may be entertainment in America can build in Europe the most dangerous illusions. If the screen were the only source of information on America the peoples overseas might well be forgiven for assuming that that great country is conceited, complacent and shallow, lacking in taste, true sensitivity and deep feeling.

It was not always so. There was a time when America brought to the screen not merely glittering and empty illusion, but the sense of a people struggling with the threats, the opportunities and the deep human excitements of the modern world. We could believe in the America of *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Fury*, *The Crowd*, *I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, *A Man to Remember* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*. We cannot believe in the America of *Since You Went Away*, *Tender Comrade*, *The War Against Mrs. Hadley*, and *Winged Victory*. The last film with its scenes of American airmen crying like small boys over their personal disappointments, must have aroused laughter as raucous in American Service canteens as in our own.

We are confident that a vast majority of American citizens knowing the facts would agree with our conclusions. But we believe that there are also a few Americans who could remedy the present situation but instead do nothing about it. We believe that those film executives and officials reponsible for the picture of the United States which reaches foreign screens are at considerable pains to prevent our receiving a complete account of American life, under the mistaken impression that to show hard reality is damaging to U.S. interests, is bad propaganda. We believe that there is a definite attempt to withhold films which might seem to indicate the existence in America of social problems and that this restriction has been allowed to reach a point where overseas audiences are left in some doubt as to whether America is so sugar-coated as to be immune from the laws of nature. It is not that we call for pictures of poverty and the class struggle. But when we hear that Mr. Riskin of the O.W.I. can announce proudly that American companies are co-operating with the Government to keep out of Europe films which O.W.I. considers unsuitable and that these unsuitable films are films *which show America in an unfavourable light*, are we beginning to discover why Robert Flaherty's film *The Land* and Pare Lorenz' *The Fight for Life* have not been made available in this country and why *The Oxbow Incident* was distributed almost in secret? There are rumours, too, that the O.W.I. would like to withdraw *The River* from circulation. Are such films dangerous simply because Mr. Flaherty and Mr. Lorenz are men who have refused to close their eyes to the fact that America belongs in the real world and that consequently an "unfavourable light" and not a holy halo does necessarily surround certain aspects of American life?

Surely these are the very aspects which are calculated to arouse the sympathetic understanding of peoples who are all too conscious

(*continued overleaf*)

of their own social problems—past, present and future. America is a country which has known unemployment, poverty and internal social stress, things which we in Europe understand. The true America is a country which can look fearlessly ahead, confident of overcoming the political and economic problems which lie before her. Indeed she will fight these problems with a vitality and confidence which may be harder to generate in the countries of the Old World. So let us be assured of it on the screen. Why should we see fleeting glimpses of real, unvarnished Americans only in such front-line documentaries as *The Fighting Lady* and *With the Marines at Tarawa?* Let documentary cameras be turned also on the citizens at home. Let us see the true Americans—not just tear-stained but immaculate war-widows in their fabulous kitchens, lost in the luxurious romanticism of war, but ordinary men and women who know what it's all about and know that the present catastrophe is not just a novelette which the Japs started with bombs on Pearl Harbour and which the Americans will finish with bombs on Tokyo. It is the full measure of our complaint against U.S. propaganda that it should be necessary to assure our more insular readers that Americans are really just as knowledgeable and intelligent as we are ourselves. To clinch that particular matter, let us finish by quoting from a letter written in a Pacific island foxhole and sent to *Time* by four American soldiers after a viewing of *Hollywood Canteen*—"It was as though we'd been taken into a millionaire's home, treated like uncouth fools to whom a debt was unfortunately owed, then sent back, dazed by the splendorous kindliness of the mighty, to our six-by-three lives. . . ."

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Our Backs to the Future

P.W.D. (Films) SHAEF was an opportunity of linking all that was best in British, American and French films. Instead it appears to have devoted itself to a damaging Anglo-Franco-American film trade war, with no holds barred. Its head is Mr. Sidney Bernstein, owner of an important chain of cinemas in greater London. He seems to have brought the outlook of a successful exhibitor of the old school into international film relationships.

One would have supposed that the personnel of P.W.D. (Films) SHAEF would have been selected from film men distinguished in their profession. In fact, the French were dismayed to find that the principal film representative in Paris was a Mr. Allan Byre, known there before the war as a film manager and salesman. He is listed in the latest edition of *Annuaire Général de la Cinématographie* we have been able to consult, as "Administrateur de la Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer". Mr. Byre is a man of integrity, and has served P.W.D. to the best of his ability, but his world is not the world of international cultural relationships; it was difficult for the French to appreciate that he was not really serving his old masters, and therefore impossible for them to give him the respect a Government servant is entitled to expect. One can hardly be surprised, therefore, that the department of Mr. Jean Painlevé, one of the most distinguished documentary and scientific film makers in Europe, and now the director-general of the Cinematographie Française, has been a little reserved.

In case it should be imagined that Mr. Byre's case is exceptional, it is necessary to add that Mr. Korda's one-time associate, Mr. Pallos, is the P.W.D. representative in Rome. It is rumoured that he has, no doubt through lack of political sense, started distribution negotiations with a renter powerful under Mussolini and who has since been put on trial for collaboration. Nor is it any secret that many of the P.W.D. film staff, representing Allied film interests, have been picked because of their continental commercial background. When one talks to some of them, it is apparent that their only interest is to regain their pre-war jobs in the continental Wardour Streets, which they hope will become as similar as possible to continental Wardour Streets before the war. The picture is an ugly one. The matter does not end with P.W.D. (Films) SHAEF. If it did, what has happened might have only been a short term policy disaster. But Mr. Bernstein is not only the head of P.W.D. (Films) SHAEF. He is also and simultaneously head of the section in the Films Division of the M.O.I. dealing with the production and distribution of films for liberated territory after P.W.D. (Films) SHAEF has passed on. True, Mr. Bernstein is under Mr. Beddington, but it is no secret that he is reluctant to accept the discipline of his director, with a consequence that there seems to be no prospect of a change of policy.

The position is clouded by little puffs of optimistic publicity. Were it not for the fact that it is strictly against the rules and etiquette of the Civil Service, one would almost imagine that Mr. Bernstein occasionally employs a press agent.

Matters are going from bad to worse, and something must be done to put them right. It is no answer to bleat out that a number of British feature films have been shown on the Continent. The Continent is starved of films, and it would have been disgraceful if such distribution had not been achieved.

So far we have dealt only with the production and distribution of British films for the Continent. What of the production of films on the Continent, for distribution here and overseas? Matters are nearly as bad. Films Division, near D-Day, was all of a tremble, and ambitious proposals for continental documentary films were made. In fact, very few units have been sent out of the country. Is this due to the fact that P.W.D. (Films) SHAEF withholds facilities, or even that Mr. Bernstein's section frustrates the ambition of the Division as a whole? Or is it Divisional policy to confine British film-making to our own backyard?

Specialised Distribution

ONE OF THE most remarkable non-theatrical developments of recent years has been the conspicuous success of the technical film designed for exhibition to specialised audiences. For example, judged by the number of bookings, the M.O.I. film, *Neuro-Psychiatry* (retitled *Psychiatry in Action* in America) is the seventh most popular non-theatrical film in the United States in 1944, the first six being combat films including *Desert Victory*. *Psychiatry in Action* had been booked 1,974 times by December 31st, 1944, and 177 times in the first two months of 1945. Forty-five prints are in circulation and 17 copies have been sold to American organisations who make their own arrangements for exhibition. The film has also been borrowed by the U.S. Army and Navy for exhibition to their psychiatric services.

There seems to be no question that this type of film presents a new and valuable method of sharing British wartime experiences and it is to be hoped that a programme of such films will be developed, both by the Government and by industry in the coming years. Provided that the films are objective, accurate and give credit fairly, they will enhance British prestige everywhere.

John Robbins. Henri Storck

WE PUBLISH in this issue articles by John Robbins and by Henri Storck. John Robbins was amongst the most promising of the new young recruits to documentary. There was only time for him to begin his apprenticeship at Film Centre before he was called up and speedily commissioned. Then only a few months later he was killed in action. We shall never know what he might have contributed to the post-war story of documentary. Henri Storck is a Belgian pioneer of the film of fact. His deep hatred of social injustice he demonstrated in *Borinages*. Now he has suffered but survived the Nazi occupation. That he is once more able to speak out freely is a result of the contribution of John Robbins and the other young men who have died with him.

The Schools and their Needs

by John Robbins and A. H. Hanson

THE educational possibilities of the film are now generally recognised and, through the work of the documentary film movement have already been partly exploited. As yet, however, practically nothing has been done to plan the production of educational films for schools and to establish machinery for their distribution. Constructive thought on the subject is long overdue and has become vital now that our whole educational system is in the melting pot to be entirely recast.

Because it is such a powerful stimulant, the film must be used with discretion. Film shows must never become such a regular feature of the school curriculum that the pupils become doped with the screen. There is no danger of this at present but it may arise when educational films are more plentiful. Like all stimulants, the film can become a mere habit—a drug which, taken too often, has the opposite effect from the one intended. Each film must have its full value extracted before it is followed by another. It must be preceded by class discussion, so that the pupil knows how it fits in with the general scheme of instruction. It must be followed by further class discussion, while its effect on the imagination is still vivid, so that the essence of its message can be driven fully home, the questions that it raises considered at leisure, and the ideas that it evolves pursued and developed. In fact, it must provide the basis for creative thought and activity. Here, of course, the teacher comes into his own. He alone can ensure that the strong mental impressions are consolidated and that the film becomes not merely an isolated experience, soon to become hazy and diffuse, but a definite landmark in the intellectual development of each boy and girl who sees it.

Teacher's Point of View

The technique of the film is not primarily the teacher's concern. He is interested, not in the technical problems of its making, but in its effectiveness as a medium of instruction. He alone can say whether it succeeds or fails. He is the link between producer and audience, a critic and adviser. In the last resort, it is his responsibility to see that the producer does his job properly and to stop any tendencies towards over-emphasis, excessive simplification, and unnecessary sensationalism which can easily arise from an artistic instead of a genuine educational approach. Fortunately, technique is no longer in the experimental stage. There is a basis of solid achievement on which to build. The combination of documentary photography, animated diagrams, cartoons, and terse informative commentary will form the basis of technique for educational film production. *Enough to Eat* with its original utilisation of the knowledge and personality of the expert, *Housing Problems* with its technique of realistic and authentic reporting, the M.O.I.'s *War in the East* with its brilliant use of animated diagrams and maps, *The Harvest Shall Come* with its combination of the documentary approach, dramatisation and use of actors, Mary Field's *Secrets of Life* series and many scientific films, show that the educational film has such flexibility and adaptability that there is virtually no subject or aspect of life that falls entirely outside its scope. In general, film technique, for people over fourteen, no longer constitutes a problem; what we need is a number of producers and directors, already experienced in the making of educational films, who will be prepared, in consultation with teachers and educationists, to adapt the established techniques to the specific needs of the various school subjects and of the different age-groups of pupils. It is obvious that a film dealing with a foreign language will be technically different from one dealing with mathematics, and it is also clear that no purpose will be served by showing to a class of six-year-olds a film adapted to the average intelligence level of the sixteen-year-olds. Particular care needs to be devoted to the production of films for the lower age-groups, as this will undoubtedly raise technical problems which, as yet, have hardly been considered. Neither these nor any other problems that arise should cause much difficulty at this stage, provided that there is the closest possible consultation and collaboration between the film-maker and the teacher. The establishment of partnership between the two is an essential requisite to the successful production of school films.

On a National Basis

If the educational film is to be developed and popularised it is obvious that the whole business of production and distribution will have to be organised on a national basis. Production, on a scale to meet growing demands will require the services of an increasing number of State film units and of private units. These have greatly expanded during the war, through recognition by the Government of the importance of the film as a propaganda medium; and it should be possible in the very near future, to have at least a few units, both public and private, specialising in the production of school films. We should demand that, as soon as the situation makes it possible, many of the personnel now making Service training films should be given the opportunity to use their knowledge and experience in this new sphere, and that the Government should inform the private units now doing general propaganda work that peace will bring with it an expansion in the use of the educational film and that the need for their services will increase, not diminish, when the fighting stops.

At the first sight, the value of the film as an instructional medium would appear to vary considerably from subject to subject. In science and geography, for instance, it is obviously high, where as in English and mathematics it seems rather low. These differences in relative value, however, may be more apparent than real. Until further experiments have been made it is impossible to say which subjects can, or cannot, be translated into the film medium. In the meantime the requirements appear to be as follows:—

1. There is a need for a number of short films relating fundamental scientific principles, explained in a simple diagrammatic way, to the industrial processes, mechanical devices and common phenomena in which their operation can be observed; a collection of "Science and Everyday Life" films, adapted to various stages of the pupil's scientific education, made by experienced producers and supervised by a scientist who, like J. B. S. Haldane, combines encyclopaedic knowledge with a flair for popularisation.

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NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Killing Rats. *Production:* Crown Film Unit. *Direction:* Graham Wallace. 14 mins. Non-Theatrical.
Subject: How and why farmers must clear their farms of rats.
Treatment: One can almost imagine Pinewood rolling up its sleeves determined to prove that when it comes to making a simple technical film, explaining a process and punching home a propaganda point, Crown Film Unit has lost none of the cunning of the G.P.O. days. You are even given the chance for direct comparison between shooting done in 1940 for *Spring Offensive* and shooting done for this production. As a tribute to the consistent high quality of the camera work of this unit I defy you to tell the difference.

Excellent is the manner in which the dramatic tone, set by the title, is developed with a care unusual in a technical subject.

The first two-thirds of the film is excellent and I am sure will be most effective. Of the last third I am not so sure—it relies on social disapproval and I don't know that castigation converts the heathen.

Because the film will be principally road-shown the commentary is admirable for its high intelligibility though at times the commentator seems to lose interest in the process.

One small criticism: the pollution of foodstuff would seem to me better shown if the droppings were in the grain and not on the outside of the sack.
Propaganda Value: Excellent for its specialised purpose, this film is unusual in being equally good for arousing general interest in the problem. Further, it can be included in any agricultural programme as a first rate school film for all ages.

Crofters. *Direction:* Ralph Keene, *Camera:* Peter Hennessy. *Music:* Dennis Blood. *Assoc. Producer:* Edgar Anstey. M.O.I. 22 mins.
Subject: Life in a remote village in Sutherlandshire.
Treatment: Artful simplicity allied to a brilliant visual sense carry us into the heart of this Highland village. The shooting is magnificent and when the film is over we really do know something about the lives of the people. Fortunately the commentator carries most of the story and the voices of the villagers are not very much used, although when they are they seem to be amazed at their own lives. The camera work is lovely and the film has a neat musical score.
Propaganda Value: The crofters are for once shown as sensible human beings and not either epic characters battling against the forces of nature or as quaint old folk over-preoccupied with sheep and their problems.

Future for Fighters. *Production:* The National Film Board of Canada. *Canada Carries On Series.* 9 mins.
Subject: Canada's plans for demobilised servicemen.
Treatment: The style of this series *Canada Carries On* is well known. For the ordinary slow-witted Englishman the commentary requires either a translator or dialogue titles; it reflects the Marx Brothers' principle—"What you don't hear you don't miss".

Leaving the commentary then for each to absorb what he can, the visuals tell a moving story of men and women reunited after years of War. They show demobilised men being retrained and placed in lasting occupations, dwelling chiefly on farming and fisheries. As with some other films of demobilisation the rather unfortunate impression is given that most men will have to change their occupations after their period of national service—almost as if army life makes them too big for the pre-war jobs, in the same way that, according to *Future for Fighters*, it makes them too big for their pre-war clothes.

The members of the investigation boards which make financial grants towards the cost of farm or boat give the impression of men of integrity and fairness. There seems to be little niggling or cheese paring; but when the returned fighter has bought his farm and drives out, followed respectfully by "Hills, the Mover", to his new homestead, a sad ghost seems to lurk round the trim farmhouse. Perhaps it is a ghost from *Grapes of Wrath* recalling to mind all the bitterness of human migration—the breaking with old friends and forming new—the fading illusion of a new start. Perhaps, a murky ghost from Europe calling up a grim picture to be rebuilt in one reel; let's hope the venture of this returning fighter will succeed better than many an ex-soldier's farm between the wars.

To all appearances this film has been shot in the manner usual to the series—by several different directors and cameramen. The result is that the quality is patchy. Perhaps unintentionally there marches through the film a beauty parade of Canadian womanhood; all these shots are well photographed; for which small mercy many thanks.
Propaganda Value: Over here this film is bound to appear shallow as we are unable to fit it into the background of Canadian existence. In Britain, *Farms for Fighters* inevitably sounds like *Three Acres And a Cow*, but in one of the world's grain countries it must bear a different meaning. So in Canada it's a big promise and a promise that presumably can be kept.

Student Nurse. *Production:* G.B. Screen Services for the British Council.
Direction: Francis Searle. *Photography:* Brendan Stafford. 15 minutes.
Subject: A nurse's training from the time she goes into a hospital as a probationer until she qualifies.
Treatment: Here is a good looking, glossy, film. The hospital is magnificent, the nurses are pretty, there are flowers in the vases and the patients look as though they had never had a day's illness in their lives. The music sweeps along lushly, the camera work is rich and, at every moment, we expect to see Laraine Day and Lew Ayres in hurried consultation, as Lionel Barrymore appears at the end of the glistening corridor in his wheel chair. It's very definitely that sort of film and really nothing to do with nursing and sickness at all. No polishing, no scrubbing, no bed pans; just an impeccably starched and becoming cap and those cool, quiet hands we know so well. But, if you accept the Hollywood convention it is very well made in spite of the fact that it badly needs a pair of scissors.
Propaganda Value: Extremely good for the unthinking If there is a vacant bed in that hospital this reviewer could do with a nice two months' stay, fresh flowers, sparkling eyes and all.

Worker and Warfront No. 14. Paul Rotha Productions. M.O.I. 10 mins. Non-Theatrical.
Subjects: (1) Typhoons firing rockets. (2) Rehabilitation of miners. (3) Itma.

Those who follow this series of bright magazine films distributed non-theatrically by M.O.I. will find this the best yet. It continues their steady progress.

The first item is a quick reportage of the assembly of the type of rockets used in our aircraft, followed by Service material from the camera gun of a Typhoon in action. The excellent cutting makes this a most exciting story which ends somewhat abruptly just as you are anxious to see the results of the rocketeering. The track would have been improved by omitting the repeated and finally irritating swishing noise which accompanies each individual rocket.

The second is the main item in the reel and displays very great care in direction and some first-class camera work. From the coal face an injured miner is taken in a shot or two—to the casualty hospital, where plaster encasement is used, and thence to the rehabilitation centre.

Here the friendliness and reassurance which the staff has managed to suffuse through the ornate marble palace of a local bourgeois comes over well. The fun of the recuperative exercises almost carries you to the point of joining in.

Then for a bewildering moment you are swept into a scene between a union official and a group of miner-patients. With every passing frame you expect the dirt to be spilt, as the union "Boss" (complete with car) persuades the miners it's a good thing to collaborate with the employers

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Schools and Their Needs

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2. Geography demands a series of regional studies, with animated diagrams and maps, designed to illustrate such things as the location of industries, distribution of natural resources, relative density of population, characteristics of various climatic zones, lay-out of trade routes, interdependence of industrial and agricultural regions and general peculiarities of life characteristic of the various parts of the world.

3. In both science and geography the problem is simply one of applying to the specific needs of the school a technique which is already well developed. The case is very different with history, which offers a big field for the production of school films, but which as yet has been very little explored. Obviously the film can be of immense value in giving that reality to the past which the average pupil finds such difficulty in envisaging through verbal descriptions of teachers and textbooks. Social and economic history possibly offer the material upon which existing techniques can be employed most easily and effectively. For younger children we should like to see a series of short films dealing with the development of various aspects of material culture, such as housing, transport, food production and dress, from the earliest times to the present day. We should also welcome a film on the Industrial Revolution; with lavish expenditure and great care in production the film can be used to bring a whole historical epoch to life. Normally, the most effective way of doing this is through the biography of some famous person. Commercial film companies have achieved something in this direction, but unfortunately most of the efforts, however admirable they may be artistically, are educationally almost valueless. If the screen biography is to be of any use, it must stick closely to the facts, give far more attention to the public rather than the private life of the subject, and indulge in sensationalism only when the events themselves are of a genuinely sensational character. *The Young Mr. Pitt, Lady Hamilton, Suez, Disraeli, Penn of Pennsylvania* are definitely *not* the kind of historical film the schools require. *Pasteur, The Magic Bullet, Alexander Nevsky,* and *Marshal Suvorov,* represent a much more accurate approach to the subject.

4. The Teaching of English offers less exciting prospects; but nevertheless we can think of at least one "English" film which is just crying out to be made—a full-length feature showing the development of stagecraft and dramatic technique from the Greek Theatre to the present day.

5. The film has been little used in the teaching of modern languages, apart from the G.B.I. experiments. This is rather surprising as the subject offers no technical difficulties. All that is necessary is to make a number of little dramas and conversation pieces, adapted, in respect of speed and vocabulary, to the stage which the pupil has reached. Each film could be preceded by an explanation of the more difficult words and phrases, and followed by a questionnaire designed to make sure that the pupils understood what the characters were saying.

6. Art and music also offer easily-realisable opportunities. An excellent film could be made to illustrate the development of architecture. Children could be made familiar with the instruments of the orchestra, and the analysis of large-scale musical works could be made by critics working in collaboration with leading orchestras and individual performers.

These are just a few of the possibilities, in respect of established school subjects, which the development of the educational film opens out before us. Great as these possibilities are, however, the film has an even more important part to play. After the war no school must be allowed to neglect the latest-developed aspect of education—*training for citizenship*, and here the film has already proved its worth. An industry which has produced *The Nutrition Film, The Londoners, Children at School, North Sea, The Harvest Shall Come, World of Plenty*, and many other excellent interpretations of national and international affairs, should have no difficulty in making films which would give the school-child a most living picture of the realities of his social environment, a genuine feeling of responsibility for what is happening in the world, and a knowledge of how, when vested with citizen's powers, he can act effectively. Our social life has become so complicated, and the field of democratic action so wide that only films such as these can give the average citizen an imaginative grasp of his place in the scheme of things and of the possibility of his *doing something* which may influence and control the great impersonal machine in which he feels himself caught up. If "citizenship" films are to become acceptable to education committees they must be free from party propaganda yet vigorous and creative in their interpretation of facts.

The way ahead for the educational film is clear enough, but a great deal of propaganda work must be done if the authorities are to be persuaded to act quickly. That propaganda must be organised with the greatest possible vigour, starting *now*. The first thing is to convince the teachers, the training college staffs, the inspectors and administrators. When that is achieved the Board of Education will find itself subjected to a concerted pressure which will be difficult to resist.

Book Review

Presenting Scotland. Norman Wilson. Edinburgh Film Guild, 21 Castle Street. 2/-.

Presenting Scotland has an introduction by Norman Wilson, an excellent selection of stills, and an iconography of films made about Scotland. The introduction and stills make the book of interest to the general reader, while the list of films is valuable to those studying the history and development of the cinema.

Mr. Wilson's thesis is that, in the nineteenth century, Scottish prestige was supported all over the world by the novels of Sir Walter Scott. The cinema age, by placing the centres of film production outside Scotland, has deprived her of a method of expression of great value. For this reason, he suggests, the documentary film is of paramount importance in the North. He recommends the revival of the Films of Scotland Committee which was responsible for a notable series of films before the war. Wilson argues that a country which has produced such documentary film men as John Grierson and Harry Watt is surely capable of supporting film units

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Status of the British Documentary

By J. R. Williams

Head of Non-Theatrical Section, Film Division, British Information Services, New York

THE prestige of British documentaries has, of course, stood high for many years wherever, in America, there is keen interest in the more serious uses of film. Prestige and circulation do not always go hand in hand, however, and it is probably fair to say that up to the beginning of the war a *succès d'estime* amongst the documentarians was all there was to compensate for a general lack of knowledge of British films amongst the American non-theatrical public, and a vague impression, derived from theatrical circles, that all British films were bad. When, therefore, the British Information Services tentatively began to distribute M.O.I. documentaries as part of their job of acquainting America with the nature of the British war effort, their situation was something like that of a yacht sailing against a strong current with the aid of a fair following wind. We have moved a good way upstream since then, but fundamentally I believe the situation is still the same. The general atmospheric conditions under which our progress is made, however, have changed a good deal.

When Richard Ford began to develop B.I.S. distribution from New York, America was not at war, and peacetime conditions obtained in the 16-mm. market. These peacetime conditions are predominantly commercial. The dealers, of whom there are vast numbers, buy films either for re-sale at a substantial profit or for renting on such terms as will recoup the print cost in anything from twelve to thirty bookings. Alongside the dealers, there are the educational film libraries (run by universities, colleges or local education authorities) which also buy and rent films. Some of these libraries operate very much as the dealers do, renting films to all comers, though their interest is naturally biased towards groups whose work has some kind of adult educational flavour. Other libraries operate within the closed circle of a state or municipal school system, and others again do not extend their activities much beyond the field covered by the college or university to which they belong.

20,000 Sound Projectors

These dealers and educational libraries make up an enormous distribution network—when the Office of War Information began to distribute 16-mm. films, it found 250 of them worthy to be its agents. The field they serve is equally enormous. It is estimated that there are 20,000 sound projectors in public or institutional buildings in the U.S.A. Texas alone claims to have a thousand.

A high proportion of these projectors are in schools and colleges, and alongside this vast technological development has gone the progress of educational experiment in the use of films. Departments of audio-visual education have been set up by universities, colleges, and school authorities all over the country, the normal practice being for these to be equipped with every facility for storing, shipping, servicing and showing films. Last summer, forty-seven educational institutions in twenty-one States offered courses in audio-visual education.

It must not be imagined that this vast distribution machinery is a kind of insatiable maw which even the films of all the nations of the world might well leave unfilled. The school market is much the biggest section of the whole. It is this market which the dealers comb most assiduously. There is a huge number of films made for it, some of them, notably those of Encyclopedia Britannica Films Inc. (formerly ERPI) being cut and tailored to the curricula with a very exact knowledge of their requirements. The last edition of the *Educational Film Catalog* listed over three thousand films, most of them American, and many of these are suitable for adult organisations, as witness the inclusion of quite a few of our own titles.

War Films

Operating in a non-belligerent America, against this commercial and educational background, the British Information Services began in 1940 to offer British war films to the American public on the only terms that would have been tolerated at the time. The films were sold and rented at prices conforming to U.S. commercial practice. On America's entry into the war, however, the picture changed. The Office of War Information began to produce and adopt films for non-theatrical distribution. Prints of these were placed free with the dealers and libraries, who accepted full responsibility for developing distribution at nominal service charges very much below the old commercial rates. Substantially this is the situation which still exists. Though the O.W.I. suffered a severe cut in its budget in 1943, it has contrived to keep its machinery in being as a means of distributing films paid for by other agencies. At the same time, the War Department and the Navy Department have both set up schemes under which "incentive" films, chiefly battle subjects, are lent to war factories (again at very low charges) and the very large distribution which has been achieved in this field is the chief adult counterpoise to the heavy school distribution.

Soon after the establishment of the O.W.I. non-theatrical schemes in 1942, it became apparent that it would no longer be possible to distribute British war films at commercial rates—indeed, the actual circulation secured on commercial terms was never very large. The O.W.I. had set a pattern which borrowers approved. They began increasingly to protest against rental charges on war films, and when the O.W.I. adopted British films for its non-theatrical scheme (*Target for Tonight*, *Listen to Britain* and *Dover* were eventually so adopted) the anomaly became unsustainable. From the autumn of 1942, therefore, the B.I.S. films were loaned at nominal service charges and the sale prices were dropped to a minimum level.

At the same time, following a plan made by Tom Baird during his visit to the United States in 1942, the system was begun of decentralising the work by establishing additional loan libraries outside New York. As the system now stands, there are six main libraries, with a Film Officer in charge of each, and at seventeen other points there are libraries (less complete but thoroughly representative) under the charge of British Consulates. In this way, the whole of the States are covered, each library serving a definite area. At practically all these distribution points, the films are housed and shipped by American 16-mm. distributors, who in most cases assist the British office in the work of promotion. The extent of their assistance is a widely varying quantity. In some cases it amounts to no more than an occasional verbal recommendation to customers; in some it is a vigorous collaboration.

In terms of the country we are working in, this is a very modest organisation, and it looks very small beside the corps of 250 professional or educational distributors who handle films for the O.W.I., or the massive organisation by means of which the U.S. War Department promotes the showing of its films in war factories. Neither can our bookings compare with those of American agencies. It is not to be expected that foreign films should have the same interest for the American people as the productions of their own country. The more deeply America becomes involved in the war, the more is this true. In the days when Britain stood alone, *London Can Take It* could electrify a country which, for all its neutrality, was deeply shaken by the spectacle of Fascist advance; and in 1941, *Target For Tonight* shone like the first-risen star. But the growth of American war films, which have rapidly improved in quality as well as quantity, has naturally transformed the market.

Nevertheless, through the indomitable persistence of our officers, we have reached an extraordinary variety of organisations. What is more, such analyses as we have been able to make show pretty clearly that we have avoided the pitfall which even American war film distribution has not altogether escaped—the overemphasis on schools. These, with their wealth of projectors, are the line of least resistance for the professional distributor. As he concentrated most of his sales drive on them in peacetime, so he turned first to them when he became a distributor for the O.W.I. Our own officers have frequently been reminded that our main job is one of informing the adult population, and the reports show how loyally they have gone after the more difficult game. Adult organisations of all kinds figure amongst our borrowers—civic groups, religious bodies, trade unions, professional organisations, government agencies and the armed services. Factories are amongst our best customers.

Distribution Areas

Our chief distribution is, naturally, around the great centres of population—New York, Chicago, Detroit, Boston and the other great industrial cities of the east, though Los Angeles has, not unnaturally, always been one of our fertile spots, and the distribution in Washington, where so many government agencies are centred, has a special importance. Apparently, however, there is no spot so out-of-the-way that one of our films may not creep into it at some time. Army Education Officers have carried prints to the lonely outposts of Alaska, the Department of Agriculture has congratulated us on the effect of our farming films in a Spanish-speaking village of New Mexico, and *Neuro-Psychiatry* has been circuited with great success throughout the Hawaiian Islands by the Regional Health Department. These are Rembrandtian highlights, however, and should not be allowed to produce the illusion that the whole picture is one of brilliance and light.

The job of finding out what sort of British film is of interest to the American non-theatrical

ınd Distribution in the U.S.A.

ɔrld has, indeed, been an arduous one, pro-ɛding over the bumpy ground of trial and ror. The films that have been outstandingly ccessful fall within a rather narrow range. First was A.R.P. films in the months following arl Harbour, when there were no American ns on the subject, and the possibility of air ack on one or both coasts could not be dis-ssed. Since then, most of the winners have en combat films and of these, the two most ccessful—*Target For Tonight* and *Desert ctory*—were theatrical films in the first place. ıe cry for films from the war fronts is, indeed, vays the loudest. It is perhaps natural that the ar Department should provide little else but ttle pictures in its programme of "incentive" ns for war factories, but the same taste goes ght through, even to the schools.

ırget for Tonight

Target For Tonight is so far our only long-ed film. After its successful theatrical run, was released for non-theatrical showing before ɛ American production of war films had got der way and there was an instant demand for

The O.W.I. made 130 prints at its own pense and sold 100 more. We sold over 100 rselves, and 40 prints in our libraries were pt constantly busy. The film was soon reported be the most heavily booked non-theatrical bject in the U.S.A. and it kept its outstanding pularity for over a year. Its success was the ɛme of all 16-mm. dealers' conferences, and ɛ Educational Film Library Association might nost be said to have founded its existence on calculation as to what might be done with succession of "Targets".

When *Desert Victory* emerged in 16 mm. ere were many more rivals in the field, and ɛ sale of prints was not so great, but it soon tablished record figures at our loan libraries. early 50,000 showings of our own prints have ɛn reported, and we gave the O.W.I. 100 prints ıich have probably produced many thousands ore showings.

Lately there has been a run on the "Act and ıct" films, a series of one-reelers produced New York under general directions from Tom ıird, and made from topical British newsreel aterial. *D-Day*, *Cherbourg* and *The Road to ris* in turn raised the spirits of our Film fficers, who must have occasional quick book-s to keep up their morale. The films are ɔviously well justified from the point of view the British Information Services, since they ɛlp to put over the story of Britain's achieve-ents; but as they are made in American style a Canadian editor and commentated by an merican voice, they are not quite relevant in discussion of how to win appreciation for itish films in the U.S.A., unless you subscribe the despairing theory that all British films ıould be remade for America by Americans.

It is reassuring to note that, of the important ɔn-combat films, two have achieved a dis-ıctive record. *World of Plenty* was at once ɔcognised in leading non-theatrical circles and as backed by the Educational Film Library ssociation. We sold outright 75 prints (which good for a film of this kind, though not as ɔod as we had hoped) and our own libraries ave recorded nearly 2,000 showings. More ırprising than this was the success of *Psychiatry in Action* (American title of *Neuro-Psychiatry*). When it was found that the film was almost invariably well received when shown, our field officers began to comb all the psychiatric and rehabilitation circles. An extraordinary array of organisations have used the film—rehabilitation agencies, medical groups, hospitals, mental hygiene associations, health authorities, college psychology groups, etc.—and its life is far from ended. This looks like the right solution to the problem of how to use a highly specialised film. and it is a good augury for international film relations of the future.

Other successes of this kind have been on a smaller scale. Too many specialised subjects are viewed with interest by the leading officers of the appropriate organisations or government agencies, are praised, perhaps briefly reviewed in a specialist journal, shown a few dozen times and forgotten. We shall probably learn a good deal more about the way to handle these films, but the difficulties must be recognised.

The chief value of a specialised film usually lies in its explicit teaching. Now it is certainly not Britain's business to hold up her own techniques as examples to other countries. In any case, specialists are often reluctant to promote the use of a film if the techniques illustrated differ in some essentials from those they approve. We have had countless examples of this. Midwives, frowned on in the U.S.A., were a fatal flaw in *Mother and Child*. The C.I.O. were friendly to Stanley Hawes' *Partners in Production* but could not formally endorse it because the discussions of the pit committee looked like an encroachment on the preserves of the trade union; one expert even regretted that *A Start in Life* was marred by a heretical lesson in nose-blowing (U.S. theory says both nostrils should be blown at once). Films have to carry such handicaps, even at home, but abroad they are more serious because they heighten the effect of strangeness. No wonder the first reaction of many an American specialist, when he sees a good British film on his subject, is something like Beethoven's "I like your opera; I think of setting it to music". In specialist provinces which are already well supplied with excellent and appropriate American films (farming, for example) it is very difficult to secure attention for ours. But we must peg away, because our job is part of the general job of promoting in all nations a livelier interest in each other's affairs and a spirit of eager exchange of ideas. *Psychiatry in Action* has shown that where this spirit exists the way is not so steep or stony.

Failures

The number of M.O.I. films which have fallen dead here, however, suggests that there is much to be learned by producers and directors as well as by distributors. Sometimes a failure is nobody's fault. It may be the very perfection and intimacy of the Englishness of a film which makes it unexportable. *The Harvest Shall Come*, for example, though it aroused the sympathetic interest of the Department of Agriculture here, dropped like a stone when it was tried on their agricultural circuits. In such cases there is no help for it. Some of our masterpieces we shall have to be content to keep, like our Wordsworths and our Elgars, at home. But it would be a counsel of despair to take this attitude to the whole issue.

The problem of what are the qualities in British films which make for success or failure in America does not take the same form (fortunately) in the non-theatrical field as in the theatrical. Anyone who wants to understand either field, however, must first get rid of the notion, natural to those who talk cheerfully of "our American cousins", that a background of vague benevolence towards Britain is a normal feature of American life. A perusal of Part IV of William Dwight Whitney's pellucidly sane little Guild book *Who Are The Americans?* will quickly remove such a complacent notion and explain why it is that a buried resentment against England still smoulders, ready to flare up at a puff of wind, in many parts of America.

Indifference . . . even hostility

This being so, the distributor of British films in the U.S.A. must count on at best a massive indifference, and at worst a suspicion or even hostility towards his products, in many quarters. Some of the leading M.O.I. films just caught a favourable tide and had a marvellous passage. *Target For Tonight* rode out on the wave of admiration for British pluck and endurance which was sweeping over the country. *Desert Victory*, in America as in England, had the good luck to arrive just as all attention was focused on the second phase of the last African campaign. Both these films, after their theatrical réclame, came into the category of famous feature films which people wanted to see again (or for the first time) in 16 mm. These fortunate considerations should be remembered when one is tempted to say that a film only needs to be good enough to makes its way in America as well as at home. And since many films are good and important which no one would mock with the word masterpiece, and very few films are lucky enough to be launched with such favourable winds behind them as those which blew the two great combat pieces to fame, the amount of apathy we encounter in America should not surprise anyone.

Indifference or resistance very often express themselves in the form of objection to British sound-tracks—especially as reduced to 16 mm. It is good to learn from Ken Cameron that direct recording on 16 mm. is likely to bring the technical quality of Crown films up considerably in the near future; but sound recording is only one part of an extremely complicated problem. The trouble really begins before the sound flows into the microphone.

The first and obvious point is that we are dealing with a public which has not been attuned to English speech as British audiences have been familiarised with American speech by Hollywood. Moreover, American speech in public is not only different from ours, it is louder, more emphatic, and often, one may concede, clearer. The bold style of *The March of Time* has a unique colour in England, but its significance in America is that it is a stylisation of the country's customary methods of public announcement. Ears attuned to such a bold and vigorous manner of public speech simply will not register the vibrations of some of our more modest speakers, and their charming off-handedness misses the point.

When it comes to dialogue, the old dilemma of documentary—whether to use trained actors

(*continued on p.* 69)

The Cinema Industry in Belgium during the Occupation

By HENRI STORCK

Well-known Belgian documentary director, maker of Borinages *who has lived in Belgium throughout the Nazi occupation*

BEFORE the war, arising from the poor sense of discipline of the cinema owners and film distributors, the cinema industry in Belgium suffered from a general lack of professional organisation. The representatives of American firms wielded considerable influence amongst the distributors and pursued a policy in accordance with their own personal interests. It was true that two large associations had been formed, that of the distributors, and that of the exhibitors (the latter formed in 1938), but behind a façade of organisation there was precious little understanding and as a result, it was impossible for effective measures to be taken.

Weakness was particularly marked on the exhibiting side. There were too many cinemas (about 1,100 for a population of 8½ million) and, most important, the cinemas were too large, with too great a seating capacity. In fact there was one seat per 16 of the population (in Brussels there were several cinemas seating 3,000). Before the war there were too many competitive attractions. The cinema owners fought with each other by issuing complimentary tickets, reducing the charges for seats, which became fantastically cheap, and by including two or even three big films in the same programme. Added to this, the high taxes and royalties augmented still further the exhibitors' costs.

Thus the general situation of the cinema was extremely bad when the Germans invaded Belgium in May, 1940. They established a military administration whose propaganda department (called the Propaganda Abteilung) was to concern itself with the artistic and intellectual life of the country. It appears that the film section of the P.A. got its orders direct from the Propaganda Ministry in Berlin. It was to carry out the plans of the secretary of the Reichsfilmkammer Karl Melzer, also secretary of the *Chambre International du Film*. This organisation grouped together all the occupied countries and certain neutral countries such as Sweden, Portugal and Spain, as well as Germany's allies. Herr Melzer's objective was to allow only German films to be shown in Belgian cinemas and to eliminate all other productions. Since Germany produced only 100 new films per year, it was necessary to close a large number of cinemas and the aim was to retain 500 of the 1,100 exhibiting before the war. A start was made by cutting out all those cinemas whose receipts did not exceed 5,000 francs a week and those backed by political parties such as the Catholic and the Socialist cinemas. The occupying authority did not manage to close all the cinemas intended, but cut the number down to 794. On the other hand it encouraged the opening of 87 halls for the showing of 16 mm. films. Melzer's plan resulted also in the shutting down of a large number of distributors who had become troublesome; out of 90 distributors, 12 only were finally authorised to carry on with their work, while the others were arbitrarily shut down.

The object of Melzer's plan was to monopolise all income for the benefit of the German cinema industry and to produce intensive pro-German propaganda. In point of fact, although Belgian cinemas should have shown German films exclusively this was not fully achieved, eight-tenths of all films shown in Belgian cinemas during the occupation being of German origin.

The first regulations issued by the military authority made it compulsory for the distributors and exhibitors to register with the associations recognised by the Germans. Following this, all English, American and French films were banned. Later on, a few French films were allowed so that the needs of the cinema could be met. German newsreels were shown compulsorily in the proportion of 3 per cent, reduced towards the end of the occupation to 2 per cent. Other regulations were added subsequently, in particular each member of the industry was compelled to prove his Aryan descent. The showing of French films in the Flemish regions of the country was prohibited; in these regions the Propaganda Abteilung allowed only German films or French films dubbed in German. Thus the people of Antwerp were only able to hear their favourite French stars talk German, a handicap that was particularly offensive! In Brussels, German films were shown in the original with French and Flemish captions or else dubbed in French. In the Walloon region, in face of the lack of success of the original German versions, only German films dubbed in French were shown. Since German production was going down each year, while the market was increasing (indeed, with travelling and holidays impossible, the theatre, concerts and the cinema were about the only distractions for the Belgians during the occupation), the Germans imported a few Italian and French films. These last had been made in Paris by the German film *Continental* or purchased by *Continental* from independent French producers.

In addition the Germans bought cinemas in several towns and used them to launch their big productions, boosting them with extensive publicity.

Altogether, over 300 films were imported from Germany and distributed by the *U.F.A.* and *Tobis* agencies, who thus managed to divert to Germany something in the region of half a million francs.

To complete the picture, it must be added that the Germans made it compulsory for the distributors to give them a list of the film copies they held, and these copies had to be handed over to be made into raw materials. Many masterpieces, particularly of the silent film period, were lost in this way. The Germans took not the slightest account of the artistic or historical value of certain valuable films which were foolishly handed over to them by faint-hearted distributors. However, some copies of American films were hidden away and escaped destruction; they were brought out and shown on our screens immediately the Germans had gone, and were enormously successful with a public that had been deprived of American and British films for four years.

It must be stressed that the compulsory showing of newsreels and the large number of German films shown have not had the slightest effect on Belgian morale, nor on the spirit of resistance. Many patriots refused to go and see German films. For the most part, these films didn't go down at all with the public. With a few exceptions, German production had lost all its particular style; its ambition was to imitate American commercial production, but the scenarios lacked imagination and the direction was completely uninspired. Production was rigidly controlled, with a consequent loss of the creative and inventive spirit. Considered as a whole, German film work was heavy, slow and sombre; the humour was laboured. There were, however, a very few interesting films, some on war subjects and some based on the lives of historical or legendary figures, as for instance the fantasy in Agfacolour inspired by the adventures of Baron Munchausen; but under Nazi influence German films had lost their special qualities of plastic beauty and sharp realism. The public reacted to the Nazi newsreels with spirit. The occupying authority had been forced to prohibit demonstrations, making the cinema manager responsible for all incidents. Some especially provocative newsreels, such as those showing Leon Degrelle haranguing his Rexist, "anti-bolshevik" legion, had to be shown with the lights on so that interruptors could be more easily spotted. On one occasion, however, it was a German officer who started the laughing and the whole audience was quick to imitate him.

Presenting Scotland (contd. from p. 65

within its own border.

Though full reference is made to Grierson in the introduction, it is surprising that *Drifters* does not appear in the list of films about Scotland. The list is unselective and therefore uncritical. It includes not only good films but some which are better forgotten—for example, a silly little British Council film, *Land of Inventors*, peppered with errors of fact, and the almost worse British Council film—*Royal Mile, Edinburgh*—calculated to make every Scotsman from Robert the Bruce to Sir James Barrie turn twice in his grave.

Status of the British Documentary
—(continued)

no can articulate but smack of the theatre, or al people who are obviously authentic but are most unintelligible—comes up in a more ute form than ever when you have an overseas dience in mind. In spite of the success of this periment in *Children of the City*, no one wants rectors to make a habit of circumventing the oblem by using a commentator to summarise the dialogue, but a more careful choice of eakers (and of what they are allowed to say) the obvious and only road to success in nerica. It is not only dialect-speakers who are source of difficulty (indeed it is to be hoped cumentary will yet solve the question of how convey to audiences both at home and abroad ne of the authentic flavour of a really good ılect speaking); the clipped speech of a naval mmander or a flight-lieutenant is just as likely be unintelligible here as the burr of a Cornish rmer.

The problem does not consist merely of hnical elements of this kind, however. The expected success all over America which we ve had with *Psychiatry in Action*, in spite of e inaudibility of so many of its lay speakers, ows that much lost detail will be forgiven if e main drift is clear and the matter is of great portance and appropriateness. The resistance British films is, in fact, largely to be explained psychological rather than auditory terms.

It is not, after all, surprising that America ould not be keenly interested in the more mely forms of British self-communing. Those cks of dwelling lovingly on our own foibles, ose family jokes and group symbols (such as e pub—still fondly believed in Bloomsbury to the social centre at which all community oblems are thrashed out)—how can we expect se to cut much ice away from home? Even an glishman cannot rid himself of the uneasy ling that self-complacency has been creeping o the films lately. It is a commodity very ficult to export (as the Americans, too, are covering if I may judge by the expressive nce with which some British audiences re- ved *The Town* and *Swedes in America* at shows ttended during my recent visit to England).

itish Styles of Speech

A note of self-complacency, however, breeds more than indifference in an audience. nat is more serious is the hostility aroused in s country by certain British styles of speech, ents, intonations and inflections. It is not only trade union leader who will say "our fellows ve an anti-Eton complex"; the dislike of any- ng like a "superior" tone of voice runs right ough America. In some cases, many of us uld concur with American judgment, but it s a surprise to me to hear the coaxing tone of *ss Radiography* described as "patronising" a New York doctor. This particular term of ndemnation, however, has been applied to re than one M.O.I. film in America. The ction is one which cannot be ignored.

Again, our celebrated understatement is well- own to the intellectuals over here, but it is arded as something rather odd and eccentric. a country where self-confidence is no more n good manners, where dramatic emphasis is tone of everyday conversation, and a buoyant imism is, as it were, the national symbol, lerstatement is not regarded as heroic. It is more likely to be regarded as a pose. Perhaps it is.

It is a naive answer to all this to say "we are as we are, and the Americans must take us or leave us". The romantic notion that works of art take shape inevitably as expressions of the soul, and are innocent of all thought of an audience, will hardly hold water for a neurasthenic lyric, let alone a film. A film addresses people. Either American people are amongst those addressed or they are not. If they are, then this must surely be one of the factors governing the mode of address.

Those of us who live for some time in America usually learn to express ourselves so as to be understood by Americans. At first, misunderstandings are the rule, and offence may be given unwittingly. But eventually, without ceasing to be an Englishman, one learns to modify's one's idiom and inflection so as to *convey* what one means, and not merely to express it to one's own private British satisfaction.

Better Articulation

I believe that documentary must learn some of the lessons which individuals learn. No one wants directors to imitate those popular novelists who study the American market and then proceed to write whatever will best sell in it. But an adjustment to your audience is not incompatible with integrity and honesty. No doubt a delicate flair is the best guide. It is not suggested that controlled reaction-tests, and pseudo-scientific word-screenings will solve the problem or that the practice of some kind of cinematic eugenics will lead to the production of ocean-crossing films. The fundamentals are too subtle and complex for that, and must be dealt with by the the equally subtle and complex mechanism of intuition. Intelligence, however, can be a useful ally of intuition. It was no doubt a natural flair which enabled Leslie Howard to become a popular American actor, whilst never losing his essential Englishness, but he is said to have taken special pains with his articulation when he first came over here, for all that. Better articulation in a large and metaphorical sense is what we need for British documentary films which come to the U.S.A.

Finally, when the producer has solved all his problems, the distributor of international-relations films will be faced with a new one in the post-war world. He will have to discover how to do his job in a way which is acceptable to the American 16 mm. trade. America is still the land in which "free enterprise" is a phrase that commands more respect than "government". John Grierson has recently written:

> "A government's use of educational films is not 'propaganda' in the ordinary sense. Certainly we cannot impose on a government the duty of planning the national effort without giving it the means of informing the people what it is doing and of obtaining their support. This is generally admitted today in every country except the United States, where, or so it appears to the outsider, the fear of the partisan political use of information services looms very large in the public argument."

The exception is a crucial one for us, and the part played by governments in the future production and international exchange of films is one which will call for the nicest adjustments in relations with the United States.

FEDERATION FOR FILM SOCIETIES

By H. Forsyth Hardy

SEVERAL attempts have been made over the fifteen years to form a federation of film societies. I recall a conference at Leicester in, I think, 1933. It began bright with promise and ended dully with something like despair after hour after hour had been talked away. Disappointed by the absence of any spirit of unity, the Scottish societies went off and formed their own Federation which has maintained since then a sturdy growth and has been a source of stimulus to the movement in the North.

Again there is talk of federation in the air, and it seems likely that there will emerge an organisation similar to Scotland's for England and Wales, with perhaps a Joint Committee for combined action when necessary. I believe that there is a strong case for both the federation and the committee. A federation for societies in England and Wales will bring immediate benefits and a general strengthening of the movement. Co-operation with the Scottish Federation would enable certain services to be operated which would be possible only if all the societies acted together.

To consider first the narrow issue: what can a federation do? Some of the results achieved by the Federation of Scottish Film Societies were recently set out by Norman Wilson, Chairman of the Edinburgh Film Guild:—

> It has set up a centralised booking system, first through its own booking agent in London and latterly through the British Film Institute.
>
> It has provided for all its constituent societies an information service and, by means of its quarterly meetings held in rotation in different parts of the country, an exchange of ideas and experience.
>
> It has obtained direct representation (with three delegates) on the Scottish Film Council, the co-ordinating organisation under the British Film Institute for film activities in Scotland.
>
> It has been able to speak on behalf of all societies and on occasion has negotiated with the trade, both renters and exhibitors, on behalf of its constituent members.
>
> It has held annual previews (before the war in London, at present in Glasgow) so that societies might have an opportunity of viewing suitable films.
>
> It has assisted societies in difficulties and has stimulated the formation of new societies.
>
> It has published its own organ, *Film Forum*, with a service of information on features and shorts.

It is reasonable to suggest that if these services were offered by a federation to film societies in England and Wales, similar results would be achieved. Federation does not mean the loss of independence nor the imposition of control from the centre. Each film society is free to adapt itself to the needs of the community it serves. The whole basis is one of mutual assistance in the achievement of a common aim.

I believe that, with a Federation of Film Societies in England and Wales, the movement will rapidly regain the impetus it had in the pre-war years. I understand that at present the total number of film societies south of the Border is only about a score. There are dozens of cities and towns which ought to be able to support flourishing societies. A federation would not attempt to force the formation of a society on a community; but it would make certain that any organisation struggling into being received advice and assistance at the moment these were most needed.

With organisations operating on both sides of the Border, certain efforts could be made on a joint basis. There are questions such as Entertainment Tax and negotiations with trade organisations where it would be an advantage if the film society movement could speak with one voice. The movement is now almost twenty years old: it can reasonably claim recognition as something more than a passing phase.

The chief benefit which would come from joint action, however, would be the means to improve the film supply position. In the early days of the movement the London Film Society acted as an agent for the import of experimental work from many parts of the world. Some of the films were subsequently shown at the specialised cinemas but this was not a necessary condition for their importation. Now there is no organisation doing this work. Joint action by strongly established federations in England and Scotland would make it possible to resume the importing of *avant-garde* films with an interest for film societies.

During the war the field for search is limited; but later there should be no tendency to confine it to France and Russia. Some of the most spirited and individualistic work has come out of Sweden and Holland and Czechoslovakia in the past—and may come again. Mexico and the Latin American countries are producing films of which we see nothing in this country. No films reach us from China and India. The most successful French and Russian films will continue to come into this country through channels now well established; but for the others it will not be enough for the societies to stand and wait.

The film society movement is at a turning point in its development. There is a real opportunity, through combined action, for a strong step forward.

Film Society News

Edinburgh Film Guild opened the second part of the season with a programme devoted to life in Holland. The twentieth century was represented by *New Earth*, *Tulips Shall Grow* and *The Dutch Tradition*, followed by the period comedy *La Kermesse Heroïque*. A later programme was specially composed to the theme of Dance and Ballet in Films and included *Dance of the Harvest*, *Kathak* and a ballet sequence from *Dance Pretty Lady*. *Steel* and *Out of Chaos* were shown with *The Forgotten Village* at the March performance.

Belfast Film Institute has shown Capra's *Battle of Russia* with *The Forgotten Village* and *Le Jour Se Leve* and *Out of Chaos* for their last two repertory shows of the season.

Irish Film Society's Monthly Bulletin announces that five programmes have been booked, including *Film and Reality*, *Song of Ceylon*, *Children of the City*, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, the *Last Laugh* and *Mother*, with lectures on films criticism and film-making completing their plans for the first season.

Dundee and St. Andrews Film Society has shown *Battle of Britain* and *Blue Angel*, and for the last performance of the season, Duvivier's *Heart of a Nation* and *Some Like it Rough*.

Manchester and Salford Society has supplemented its 1945 programmes with Film Forum discussions on "Film amd Film Societies", "Freedom of the Screen" and "Future Policy and Programme." The second opened with an address by Ellis Smith, M.P.

SCIENTIFIC FILM ASSOCIATION

The Scientific Film Association has now opened a branch in the North of England under the secretaryship of Mr. John Maddison, Creskeld Villas, Arthington, near Leeds. Scientific film societies have been, or are being, started in Leeds, Doncaster, Sheffield, Manchester, Huddersfield and Hull. In Leeds special medical film shows are being organised, and the local branch of N.A.T.K.E. is considering running Sunday morning shows of scientific films for their members.

Correspondence

Alberto Cavalcanti has received the following letter from J. Bellini who, having created in pre-Fascist days a Documentary Film Company in Italy, made for his first production a most remarkable and moving account of the peasant pilgrimage in the Abruzzi Mountains:—

DEAR CAVALCANTI,

I wanted to answer your letter before but could not do so.

I met Pat Jackson who had begun telling me about the important development of documentary in England when we were interrupted by his departure. So for me the picture remains incomplete; yet not quite so much as to keep away one doubt from me. Is documentary, throughout so many evolutions, drifting from its original nature? My fear is probably due to my deep love for G.P.O. documentary—or perhaps to a kind of "stiffness" one gets after so many years of waiting and silence.

I would like to tell you about what is going on over here. There is confusion and, after the acquisition of liberty—the gift which was offered us after twenty years of suppression—very little liberality. But it would be all too long and difficult to put in a letter. I will tell you more about it when we meet again.

Meanwhile my friends and I are anxious to do all that we can to arouse an interest in documentaries among the Italian public. We should be most grateful for any advice or help that you can give.

Documentaries—in the widest sense of the word—have been ignored over here. For years all that we were shown were Italian and German propaganda films: never anything from any other country. My own little documentary* was suppressed immediately after its Venice showing and is still lying and waiting.

Our native industry has reached a crisis. During the Fascist régime economic and political privilege and the abnormal situation of markets alone made its existence possible. Since the liberation, foreign films, chiefly American, have reappeared on the market. Italian documentaries and shorts have been forbidden and—with the single exception of newsreels—not even foreign documentaries are shown. At the very beginning the P.W.B. made one or two documentaries and, I understand, has others in course of preparation besides some special documentaries about political events which are not to be shown to our public. Could it be possible

**Peasant Pilgrimage.*

Correspondence *(continued)*

that P.W.B., being an exponent of American and British interests, is planning a development aimed at stifling the growth of a new Italian industry?

In the circumstances it will be clear to you as it is to us that now is the right moment for action on the basis of what I have mentioned. It is our belief and purpose that "documentary" must finally succeed in asserting itself as something of its own—a separate branch with a quite different function from that of the commercial film. Once and for ever it should be dissociated from the commercial film and thereby from the customary wrong valuation and wrong treatment on the part of distributors and exhibitors.

Such an enterprise requires clear ideas, constancy of purpose and the capacity for choosing and preparing good films. It calls for the establishment of an efficient system of distribution and steady and regular assistance from those who support it financially.

I can assert that "documentary", as we interpret it, would help to satisfy the present tendencies of our public and its aspirations, long concealed, towards every manifestation of superior taste and expression of a better social and moral order. This is proved by the deep interest aroused by some parts of newsreels typically documentary. A much smaller interest, to my idea, was given to American films which had been anxiously awaited during the last six years. On the other hand the long Dovzchenko documentary *Battle of the Ukraine* had a tremendous success, in spite of all that was done to diminish the importance of the sound track.

The success of our group today would lead to more favourable conditions for the documentary production of tomorrow, when we hope to be able to begin a new creative activity. On practical grounds it would be desirable, for the most efficient working of our plan, to use two different organisations:

(*a*) A distributing organisation charged with choosing and collecting documentaries, particularly many beautiful and memorable films made before the war and absolutely ignored by Fascist Italy.

(*b*) An exhibiting organisation to take over cinemas in every large town in Italy, beginning with Rome, the programme of which would be composed only of documentaries. In other words the creation of a documentary circuit.

The distributing organisation would be the small society which produced my own documentary and which is now ready to plan all the agreements required for the first phase of this kind of work. The success of the second organisation would be dependent upon the efficient functioning of the first.

It is clear to us that great success cannot be expected right from the beginning, but we are firmly convinced that we shall end by achieving our aims—*given the necessary help and encouragement by those who are in the position to give it.*

And this is why I write. Great Britain, more than any other nation, is at the head of documentary development—and I cannot think of a better person than yourself to collaborate with us, to present our case to documentary sympathisers over there. I would wish this collaboration to be an artistic, financial and a technical one.

Will you help?

Yours,

Italy G. BELLINI

New Documentary Films (*contd. from p.* 64)
to get back health and strength to return to work.

The third item, Itma, needs no introduction. The shooting is stagey, quite rightly so, and the only comment came from my neighbour at the showing—"We could do with another reel of that".

Propaganda Value: By now these magazines must be the God-sent standby for all regional officers. They carry out extremely well a function indispensable in war and peace, that of relating the machine operator to the users of his product.

Kathak. *Production:* Information Films of India. *Director:* Modhu Bhose. *Editor:* Pratap Parmar. *Producer:* Ezra Mir. 10 minutes. N.T.
Subject: Kathakali dancing.
Treatment: The film opens with a brief sequence showing the way in which the hands of an Indian dancer play an important part in the development of the dance itself. Then we see two or three sequences of different sections of traditional dances. The dancer is extremely good and the direction as excellent as one would expect from this celebrated Indian director. The film is enormously helped by an excellent commentary, the speaker of which has one of the best commentary voices we have heard for a long time. The description successfully avoids the arch approach we have learnt by bitter experience to associate with any such activities as dancing and has not fallen into the error of over enthusiasm. Simply and lucidly it illuminates what is going on on the screen and makes the highly stylised dancing as sensible and exciting as it really is.

Skilful editing helps the film to make its points and only the poor camera-work detracts from the pleasure one has in seeing this film.
Propaganda Value: Excellent. We could do with a lot more films like this which present to us exotic things as being reasonable and not part of the theatrical mumbo-jumbo of the Mysterious East.

Cornish Valley. Green Park Productions. *Direction and Script:* Ralph Keene. *Camera:* Peter Hennessy. *Associate Producer:* Edgar Anstey. 17 minutes. N-T.
Subject: Life in a small Cornish valley.
Treatment: What a pleasure it is to look at a film by Keene. As a director he never comes between the subject and the audience and yet how skilfully he carries one's eyes across the country. Shot follows impeccable shot and before our eyes Cornwall comes to life. There is a warmth in his handling of people too, which is all too, seldom met with.

We see the lives of two or three families of farmers, what they do, how they live. And, in an opening sequence, this is set against a general background of Cornwall. In helping to show us this small valley, the quality of the camera work matches the skill of the direction. It is a great pity that the producer has not yet managed to find a commentary style and speaker to match his director's work. This film is partly commented by the people of the valley themselves. As they move about their work in farm and field each one takes up his or her part of the story. Their voices are clear and understandable, but their continual surprise at their own daily doings is most tiresome and they have a regrettably knowing style of speaking.
Propaganda Value: Excellent. Another part of England comes to life under Keene's camera and takes its place in his smooth pattern of Britain.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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THE FIRST SIX YEARS

On September 3rd the Ministry of Information will be six years old. Its sixth birthday will be a critical one, for the late Government proposed to stifle it as soon as the war with Japan had been won, and its dissolution had already begun. Brendan Bracken said many times that he thought the work of his Ministry to be a disagreeable imposition on the public only made necessary by the war situation. He even publicly insulted his own staff by saying that they joined with him in wanting to shake the dust of the M.O.I. from their shoes as soon as possible. He had no appreciation, apparently, of the permanent value of many of the services of information built up during the war; or if he appreciated their value, he feared their very success and sought to kill them all the more vigorously. Now Brendan Bracken has gone. His Ministry has survived. There are few of his staff who will not feel relieved.

The new Government will find the Ministry of Information pretty well in full working order, and will be able to consider its future at leisure. There will be time, for instance, to weigh evidence before deciding whether to keep the services of information in one department or whether the functions of the various divisions of the M.O.I. should be handed over to other government departments. Though the biggest Producer Division of all—Films Division—has no obvious home (we hope that not even the Treasury in its sillier moments would put it under the Stationery Office) there are niches for most of the others. It would be possible to transfer the Foreign Divisions to the Foreign Office. The Empire Division could be divided between the Dominions Office and the Colonial Office. The Home Division could go to the Home Office, and so on.

While the relative virtues of centralisation and decentralisation are being pondered, no doubt the achievements of the divisions themselves will be assessed. Was it good or bad that the Publications Division found itself compelled to avoid participation in the ideological fight with fascism and to concentrate on plain objective statements—and excellent many of them were—about the tactics and strategy of the war? Was it true that the Campaigns Division was weak because it was mainly controlled by Advertising Agents? Have the Regional Offices of the Home Division, in spite of some odious undemocratic traits exhibited by a minority of their officers, come to fill a place of great importance in our national life which should be perpetuated? On such points we shall express no opinion at this stage, but we feel it right here to attempt a short assessment of the work of Films Division.

First it must be noted that, unlike any other Division of the M.O.I., Films Division was not a new invention. It grew naturally out of the G.P.O. and E.M.B. Film Units, and its work must be judged against a perspective which stretches back to 1929 and which embraces not only *Target for Tonight*, *London Can Take It*, *Desert Victory*, *World of Plenty*, *Western Approaches*, *Our Country* and *The True Glory*, but also *Drifters*, *Industrial Britain*, *Night Mail*, *North Sea* and *Song of Ceylon* (made by the E.M.B. Film Unit for The Ceylon Tea Propaganda Board).

True, for a few months at the beginning of the war Films Division was headed by Sir Joseph Ball, at one time Director of the Conservative Party Research Department and in charge of films for the Conservative Central Office. Sir Joseph had as lieutenants, among others, Alderman Joseph Reeves and Oliver Bell. The only result of his stewardship seems to have been *The Lion Has Wings* which Vincent Sheehan says he saw a few months later being run as a comedy—in Berlin! When Sir Kenneth Clark became director of the division, to be followed by Jack Beddington in the Autumn of 1940, staff and administration were overhauled, and the E.M.B.-G.P.O. tradition restored. The failure of the Ball regime was because he did not, perhaps could not, realise that he was facing a public which did not require sobstuff appeals to make it fight (it had made up its mind already about this) but which was hungry for objective clear information, which the documentary school had always claimed could be given a dramatic and emotional appeal of its own. It was this new frame of mind which compelled the powers to bring out again what perhaps they hoped had been put away for good—the contentious, obstinate, unruly yet disciplined, documentary school of film makers who had been trained under Tallents and Grierson and whose pre-occupation with a world of new social values was in key with the new public temper.

From that day to this Films Division, though it has occasionally sat down in the middle of the ring with flaring nostrils like a circus horse, has on the whole moved patiently, if sometimes slowly, forward. Today, considering the record of documentary films compassing scores of masterpieces and near-masterpieces since *Drifters*, one thing is certain. The question of the comparative merits of private enterprise and public enterprise as a means of securing documentary, educational and instructional films is academic, for there has been hardly any private enterprise at all except the strange altruistic, unplanned, unbalanced and now apparently abandoned adventure of Gaumont British Instructional from about 1932 to

(*continued overleaf*)

1937. Except for G.B.I., the only operators of any importance outside the Government have followed the Government's example, and have used the film as an instrument of public education; witness the valuable contributions of Gas, Shell, Cadbury and I.C.I. If to the achievement of the British Public Services be added the film achievements of the Canadian Government since 1939, with its elaborate home theatrical and non-theatrical organisation, combined with the international circulation of *The World in Action*, the overwhelming strength of public enterprise in the documentary and educational field is proved beyond controversy. The assertions of some sections of the Film Industry that they could show up the Government's film efforts as drab and dreary claptrap, if only the Government would give them the money instead of spending it itself, merely raise a yawn.

Before analysing what must yet be done before Films Division can properly become what by rights it can and should become —that is, the foremost and most imaginative film producing and distributing agency in the world, let us briefly record some of its achievements since the outbreak of war, always remembering that the roots of many of these go deeply into the G.P.O. and E.M.B. Film Units.

Films Division took the non-theatrical distribution of the G.P.O. and developed it until it is today an essential part of the social life of the country. Its 150 projectors, distributed over twelve regions with twelve regional film officers and their related staff, have created a new taste, a new expression of citizenship which has become an essential part of our democratic life. Related to the non-theatrical scheme is the Central Film Library, the repository, not only of Government films, but of most important films, no matter what their origin, provided they carry no direct advertising. In this way, the library has become representative of all that is best in documentary whether from home or overseas sources, and it has the reputation, particularly, of being the most efficient film library in the country. In the public cinemas, there can be no doubt that the Division's notable series of feature documentaries including *Target for Tonight*, *Western Approaches* and *World of Plenty*, combined with the long series of shorter weekly and monthly films for regular theatrical distribution, have created a taste for documentary which the most stick-in-the-mud exhibitor can ignore no longer. At the beginning of the war Films Division was most sensibly made responsible for the financing and planning of productions by the Service Units, who could distribute no films to the public except under its auspices. In this way, such films as *Desert Victory* and *The True Glory*, are functions of Film Division.

Films Division has by no means concerned itself wholly with the spectacular. There has been a steady stream of less ambitious films which have been, in their way, no less finely made and no less important than the others. Such films as the series on gardening, the Civil Defence training series, which included the noteworthy *Rescue Reconnaissance*, and the innumerable descriptive films of all kinds provide a basis for future government film activity perhaps even more strongly founded than that provided by the more sensational films. In passing, the Division's newsreel trailers and "campaign" films such as *The Nose Has It* and *Go to Blazes* have put the advertising film maker in the shade—permanently, we hope —for no film advertising agency has approached the standard set by these films either in wit, aptness, or even in volume of output. (One trailer a week has been issued for about two years without a break.) Though the public Service is often supposed to be fearful of experiment, this is anything but true of the Government film set-up which, beginning with the biggest experiment of all—*Drifters*, has experimented continuously, boldly and successfully. When one looks back at *Coalface*, *We Live in Two Worlds*, *Colour-box*, *When the Pie Was Opened*, *Listen to Britain*, *Kill or be Killed*, *These are the Men*, *World of Plenty*, *Our Country*, or even that seldom projected *jeu d'esprit*, *Pett and Pott*, one realises that here is a laboratory and workshop beyond the range and imagination of any commercial enterprise.

We cannot bring this catalogue of achievement to an end without mentioning the Films Division invention of the technical film memorandum of the type of *Neuropsychiatry* and *Personnel Selection*, the experiments in combining the studio approach with documentary—*Welcome to Britain* and *Fires Were Started* for example, the huge influence of the Division on the makers of features—Launder and Gilliat directed their first film for the Division, which also financed the script of *Millions Like Us* and profoundly influenced the production of such films as *In Which We Serve* and *The Way Ahead*, the setting up of Pinewood as a combined headquarters for Crown and the Army and R.A.F. Film Units, and finally the little minute-and-a-half skit on Hitler and all that he stood for called *The Lambeth Walk*.

Such a list of splendid undertakings must not blind us to shortcomings. Though few can complain that their films have been spoiled through lack of funds, the financial administration of the Division is not its strongest point. Though the finance officers are unswervingly honest, they are also unswervingly obstinate. They know something about cash, little about economics and nothing about values. They have devised a strange, inefficient, wasteful and inflexible financial system which works neither to the advantage of the film maker nor the Government. It is valid from one point of view only; it protects the finance officers from reprimand, if their department comes under fire.

Then there is the fiasco of Bernstein's films for liberated territories, which he seems to have approached under the illusion that the new Europe will resemble a bigger and better Wardour Street. Indeed, Bernstein has revived an attitude which one had thought abandoned for good with Sir Joseph Ball.

Perhaps these things are of small importance compared with four deficiencies which Films Division suffers—lack of planning, lack of contact with the public it serves; timidity; and parochialism; deficiencies which must be overcome if the division is to reap the benefits of its wartime experience. Of these the first is to-day the least important, though earlier notes in *D.N.L.* suggest it to have been a major problem at one time. Indeed, one can say that the planning of the division's work today is greatly superior to what it was only two years ago, when the subjects to be made seemed to be chosen at random out of Harrod's catalogue. Lack of contact, timidity and parochialism persist. Films Division is full of men and women of brilliance, integrity and common sense, but they are not clairvoyant. They cannot tell what people are feeling by second sight, yet there is little or no first-hand contact. For some unexplained reason the services of the Home Intelligence Division—now partly scuppered by Bracken—have practically never been called upon, either to assess the effect of films made, or to help to determine in advance what films were necessary and desirable. Perhaps the Director of Films Division thought he knew the answers by instinct. Whatever the reason, the Director and his staff have tried to gauge public opinion and feeling vicariously through the medium of the telephone, the press, the Store Street pubs and the Savoy, just as Henry James's Daisy Miller, sitting in a village post office, tried to participate in the life of the grand people in the neighbourhood by reading the telegrams they sent. We suggest that from now on every officer of Films Division should spend one week in four out of his office and in the regions, and one month in twelve overseas, studying the life and outlook of the people to whom he wishes to speak through the medium of the film.

Films Division has been timid from the beginning of the war. It seems sometimes to have been frightened of its own public, and it has never made any films of note on trade unionism, the Co-operatives, Joint Production Committees, or any of the social organisations which are at the root of our democratic society. This defect is a great weakness of the Division, and a dozen films like *World of Plenty* or *Proud City*, neither of which deal with the mass basis of British life, will not make it good. Of course, Films Division cannot be blamed exclusively. The fear of that popular will, which organisations like the Co-ops. reflect, is deep in the minds of many Government Departments, and was therefore apparent in the policy of Films Division. We are not sure, however,

that Films Division, which must have known that its public required such films, always put up the strongest possible fight for their production.

Finally and most importantly we come to the Division's parochialism. Its films rarely take account of the world outside its own backporch. Other countries, English as well as foreign-speaking, have cultures and traditions of their own of which they are proud. The Division often seems to assume, not only that everything British is best, but that every country recognises this as a law of creation. Thus the Division's films have sometimes had less carrying power than they should have had, and its work has often been outclassed by the international sense of the National Film Board of Canada. Surely the Division might have learnt—may yet learn—lessons from the international approach, not only of Grierson's films, but of its own most important and successful *World of Plenty*? At the present rate of going the Division may be the last organisation in the British Isles to recognise that what happens on the other side of the Channel or in the Balkans or in Spain or in Russia or in any other quarter of the world may be as important as, or even more important than, what happens at Little Ditcham-by-the-Sea. In this connection it is not fair to place the whole blame with Films Division. Documentary film units have sometimes been as parochial in outlook as the Division itself. The two sides have occasionally conspired together to pull wool over each other's eyes, and to convince each other that we would be very much better off photographing the moon—our own special British moon—through the bottom of Nat Gubbins' upturned beer mug.

Such are the strengths of Films Division. Such we conceive to be its weaknesses. But none will deny that Films Division has become a great instrument of Government. We hope that it will not only be preserved but will flourish whatever the fate of the Ministry of Information. Good luck to its Director and staff, and a long life!

NOTES OF THE MONTH

M.O.I. Output

COMPARED WITH 1943, the total cut negative footage of M.O.I. production fell in 1944 by some 26,000 feet from 175,613 feet to 120,565. The number of films issued dropped from 160 to 130. This drop was not caused by diminishing demand, for even as we write the demand for product by the M.O.I. appears to be as heavy and as urgent as at any time before. It must be accounted for in other ways. Even when allowance is made for V weapons, war weariness, and worn-out equipment (a most important factor to which too little attention is being paid by the M.O.I. and the Board of Trade) the fall remains disturbing. What are the causes other than the incidence of war? We believe they will be found, partly inside, partly outside, Films Division. Inside, we have the impression that more and more people have to be consulted before scripts can be agreed or rough-cuts accepted. Minor officials from other Government Departments seem to feel their prestige enhanced in the eyes of their masters if they can call for footling and unnecessary changes. The Finance branch of the M.O.I., never its most efficient section so far as films are concerned, seems to grow more sluggish as time goes on. Outside Films Division, we think we can sometimes detect an infinite pondering on scripts, a shovelling about of information inside a mind temporarily isolated from the practical needs of ordinary living. What one would have thought could have been finished in three weeks takes six or eight or even twelve weeks, and at the end there is sometimes little to show for what were evidently painful mental gymnastics. Above all, there is sometimes a lack of enthusiasm; films become something which must be begun—somehow, and finished—if possible. These things are, of course, only occasional (documentary would be finished if they became universal) but they are certainly present sometimes. If documentary is to take the next step they must be fought and overcome.

N.A.L.G.O.

THE RECONSTRUCTION Committee of the National Association of Local Government Officers has published a *Report on Relations between Local Government and the Community*. Realising that healthy and efficient local government depends on popular understanding, the report affirms that there are still large masses of people ignorant of, and therefore uninterested in, its methods of operation. Pressing for a policy of public relations which shall not be a one-way traffic of self praise, but a bridge between administrator and public, the report calls not only for local public relations officers, but for a National Public Relations Council, among whose duties would be the encouragement of the teaching of civics and citizenship in schools and to adults, the establishment of good relations with the press and the maintenance of a public information bureau. Inevitably the report examines the film and its proposals are cogent and far-reaching. The new Public Relations Council will seek to influence feature producers to tackle Local Government themes—*South Riding* is quoted as a happy pre-war example. Short films should be sponsored for use in schools. Recognising that Local Government has a fair claim on the Ministry of Information's non-theatrical service, which the report hopes to see extended after the war, the production of a broader type of documentary film is also suggested. Finally the report recommends the use of the film for training. An interesting suggestion is that there should be, not only broad documentary and educational films of national significance, but also smaller, less ambitious films about particular localities and problems, presumably to be made by the small production units which are now springing up under the guidance of amateur societies and local photographic dealers.

Our Country

SIGNIFICANT films opening up new horizons, devising new techniques, saying something new in a new way, are few and rare. *Our Country*—of which we reprint in this issue a section of commentary by Dylan Thomas—we believe to be such a film. Like all good poetry—film or written—experienced for the first time, it arouses strong feeling. Such works make those who hang on to cultural conventions for the comfort of their souls bruised and angry. They make those less inflexibly tied to the conventions of today and yesterday experience something so new, unexpected and exciting that at first it cannot easily be analysed. Of the powers of *Our Country* to move there can be no doubt. To some it is the most notable film of the last five years; it makes others very angry indeed. Richard Winnington in *The News Chronicle*, for instance, and Miss E. Arnot Robertson on the radio were so annoyed by it that they almost seemed to lose that detachment essential for objective criticism. On the other hand, the film Trade Press, of which the reviewers are both shrewd and hard-boiled, found the film good. *Our Country* also provokes technical argument. Some find the blending of Thomas's verse commentary with the visuals satisfying, others think the commentary unnecessary, and others again find it an impediment to the enjoyment of the film. But, whichever way one looks at it, the film leaves few unmoved, either to anger, or to pleasure, or to a disturbing mixture of the two.

Those who consider the film irredeemably highbrow should notice that it had a West End premiere, not only at the Academy Cinema but at The Empire, Leicester Square.

NON-T IN THE RIDINGS

D.N.L. has published, from time to time, articles and statistics on the general non-theatrical film activities of the Ministry of Information. Here is an impression of three years of such work in one particular area—the East and West Ridings of Yorkshire. It is contributed by John Maddison, Film Officer for the North-Eastern Region, since 1942.

PEOPLE OF a remote community in one of the high level Yorkshire Dales on the edge of the Lake District, assembled to see the first sound films ever shown in their village; some having tramped miles through the newly fallen snow to be there. . . . At midnight, in an immense underground canteen like a strange palace, three thousand aircraft workers following with northern detachment a documentary argument for the democratic way of life. . . . The School clinic of a mining town where the Medical Officer introduces films of health and immunisation to a gathering of working class mothers, many with babies in their arms. . . . The academic and the practical joining hands in the long upper room of an inn in a rural Pennine centre, as a scientific expert from a nearby University meets questionings stimulated by the showing of a film on clean milk to a group of farmers. . . . A railway institute in one of the most ancient of English cities, the setting for the pride and enthusiasm of an audience of civil engineering managements and workers witnessing film records of achievements which paved the way to the successful assault on Fortress Europe.

These and many other human and exciting memories are, one feels, sufficient reward for long and often harassing hours spent in carrying through the mobile film plan during the war years.

Here as elsewhere the scheme began modestly almost exactly five years ago. A small band of five projectionists, well equipped, but with a very small repertory of films, set out then to give shows to all kinds of voluntary organisations. The scheme has grown; there are now twelve 16 mm. units and one 35 mm. unit drawing upon a considerable library of films housed regionally. But from the beginning the basis for general informational shows has remained existing local groups, the Women's Institute, the Working Men's Club (Yorkshire is rich in these), the Townswomen's Guild, the Church Fellowship, the Adult Education Group, and the Youth Club. The secretaries of these organisations have come to look upon films as a regular element in their programmes of activities. In all this time, recurring shows have brought to such audiences a steady objective picture of a world at war. The screen in its own potent ways has sent across to them many messages, some temporary and negative, others more permanent contributions to healthy democratic thinking. The enthusiasm for these shows persists. The Secretary of one East Riding Women's Institute wrote a short time ago "The film shows are something we look forward to in this village".

Early in the scheme the need to provide a film service for industrial workers in their own canteens was recognised. The approach had to be somewhat different—the clangour and bustle of a works canteen is, for example, an unsympathetic background to the quiet and leisurely film well suited to rural audiences. Programmes must be short (they run usually for 25 minutes, and consist of one or two films) and incisive. Factory audiences have usually known a good thing when they have seen it and have shown a reassuring dislike of occasional frills and falsities. *Words and Actions* and *Crown of the Year*, to take two widely differing examples, were films appreciated by Yorkshire workers in heavy industry. As with the general evening audiences the content of programmes presented to factories has on the whole been uncompromisingly solid. A recent survey of the attitude to these monthly film shows of workers and managements in nearly 200 factories has revealed that they remain a desired part of leisure activities.

All this has not been a one-way traffic in ideas. Audience reactions have been gathered through written reports from independent organisers (received on standardised forms for at least 95 per cent of the shows given) from a great many conversations with local contacts and from periodic conferences of projectionists, at which these have told of their experiences and the reception of their programmes. Much has been learnt about techniques of distribution and presentation and a smooth working machinery has been evolved. Experience has been gained in the building up of eighty-minute programmes for general audiences. These programmes must not contain too many major themes; there must be nice alternations between argument and movement and change of scene; and the last item should be robustly conceived and impressive.

A considerable network of voluntary helpers has been created, many organising whole series of shows in their own area. The confidence and interest of these voluntary workers could only be maintained by a steadily improving standard of films available, and through their knowledge that they had a genuine stake in the working operation of the scheme. Important too has been their recognition that the Government servants with whom they were co-operating were willing

to go to all kinds of trouble and personal inconvenience to ensure an efficient service. Drawn from local Information Committees, these contacts have included librarians and schoolmasters, municipal officers and town councillors, trade unionists and industrialists. The volume of local goodwill towards non-theatrical film engendered in this way has been vital to its success.

Film has played its part in Yorkshire in spreading specialised knowledge and skills essential in war. Its first major use was as a weapon of mass-instruction in Civil Defence, where well organised cadres of fireguards, wardens, and others studied, through non-theatrical film, anti-gas procedures, rescue techniques and methods of combating changing types of incendiary bombs. In those parts of the region relatively unmolested by the enemy, films have made a principal contribution towards maintaining keenness and efficiency. Though ready-made audiences were not there as in the case of Civil Defence, a vast amount of specialised film activity has gone on in other civilian fields. Where films have been tied closely to specific drives, as in *Blood Transfusion* and *Mass Radiography*, it is not surprising that spectacular results have been obtained in this region. Much has depended on the "film-mindedness" of officials of other Government Departments and of local authorities. The annual Dig for Victory campaigns in the West Riding have been good instances of the effectiveness of this sort of co-ordination. Gardening films have indeed been amongst the most-admired and least-criticised of official instructional films. The main criticism levelled against them has been that they have made things seem too easy—shrewdly countered by one amateur gardener's observation that this might well be because films actually did make things easier.

An interesting development in the later war years has been the series of instructional and training films for such technical and professional workers as boilerhousemen and fuel engineers, doctors and nurses. Agricultural teaching films have brought the results of expert study to the farmer and farm worker. In this region, the effective use of these films has been organised with the ready co-operation of the County Executive Committees. Each year technical officers, experts in various fields of agriculture, have assembled for a full day's conference to see new films, to appraise them and to determine the best manner of using them. On the last occasion this was followed up by written contributions which were embodied in a comprehensive document and sent *via* the Films Division in London, to the producers of the films. The main conclusions reached at this Conference were (*a*) that these instructional films were an extremely useful addition to the technical officer's equipment and that their quality was improving; (*b*) that variations in local conditions were still not taken sufficiently into account when making the films and (*c*) that methods were sometimes depicted which remained matters of controversy amongst experts. A suggestion was made that handbooks summarising the contents of the films and providing footnotes to any special procedures and locations used would go far to meet these criticisms. It may be added that, for the layman, to see films in the company of specialists is a stimulating and at times chastening experience.

One experiment made here in Yorkshire during the past eighteen months, though it falls strictly outside the scope of the present article, deserves mention. This has been a series of mass demonstrations of medical films to doctors and nurses in public cinemas. Seven of these shows, for instance, have been presented in Leeds to audiences of upwards of 1,500 at a time, and five in York to audiences of about 800 for each show. These shows have given doctors and nurses some idea of how film is being used for popular instruction in social and preventative medicine, and have indicated to them the potential usefulness of the cinema in medical teaching. The occasions have been impressive of themselves, for seldom can such large audiences of this type have met regularly together.

Looking back, certain impressions predominate. Innumerable voluntary organisations (including many possessing their own projectors and calling upon the Central Film Library) have come to look upon the regional office for guidance and advice in the use of films. One has noticed over the years the increasing maturity of the work of short film producers (compare, for instance, *Fireguard*, useful in its day, with the moving realism and fitness for purposes of *Rescue Reconnaissance*). Significant has been the growing tendency for audiences to meet together to see programmes developing a single theme in a well-balanced way. And from a personal point of view, one has come in retrospect to see all this work as a new, different, less formal but quite genuine kind of public education.

This discursive summary has provided no exact statistical analyses; the following details do, however, give some notion of the size of the total effort involved over the past five years:—

Over 20,000 shows given in village halls, schools, canteens, workshops, libraries, town halls, church halls, clinics, fire stations, first aid posts, clubs, wardens' posts, community centres and hostels, council chambers and amid the discreet luxury of a spa assembly room. Total audiences of some four million people, including industrial workers, doctors, rural workers, teachers, industrial trainees and university students, civil defence workers, nurses, agricultural discussion groupers, parents, children, stevedores, boilerhousemen, amateur gardeners and rabbit keepers, Make-do-and-Menders, and Kitchen Fronters, Bevin boys and land girls, pre-service youths and Young Farmers and all sorts of ordinary men and women. More than 500 different film subjects presented, single copies of some of these being used more than 200 times.

A team of up to twelve projectionists, backed by a small maintenance and clerical staff, has carried on this work. Four of the five original 16 mm. projectors have been in continuous use since 1940. Each has done at least 2,500 shows and been hauled, jolting, some 50,000 miles across the two Ridings from Spurn Point to Sedbergh, and from Flamborough Head to the Borders of Derbyshire. A final tribute is due to the men (and women!) and machines, who have helped to make non-theatrical film a feature of war-time life in Yorkshire.

BOOKS REVIEWED

An Index to the Creative Work of Erich von Stroheim. Herman G. Weinberg. 1943.

An Index to the Creative Work of David Wark Griffith. (Part I). Seymour Stern. 1944.

An Index to the Films of Charles Chaplin. Theodore Huff. 1945.

Special Supplements to "Sight and Sound", published by The British Film Institute.

If one had told Chaplin or Griffith in 1920 that in another twenty-five years people would be drawing up iconographies of their work and preserving it in museums they would have thought you mad. (Not so Stroheim who was self-consciously—almost too self-consciously—an "artist" with an eye to posterity). But it has happened, and Messrs. Weinberg, Stern and Huff have led the way with their carefully documented booklets. The films people used to laugh at till they rolled off their seats, the villains which they tried to boo off the screen, are now being labelled and put in show cases. In the process something has been lost and it is difficult now to conjure up the impact of comics like Chaplin and films like *The Birth of a Nation*. Today, people take their films as part of the entertainment landscape. Thirty years ago, or less, they had the effect of the epic and the popular ballad. They were the art of the people and, as such, were thought wicked and vulgar by all who prided themselves on being respectable and cultured. Today, what the story film has gained in polish it has lost in gusto. Experiment and the art of the cinema is to be found now, not usually in the entertainment film, but in the documentary film, and the documentary film makers have a way to go yet before they can command the vitality and the universatility of Griffith and Chaplin. In passing, one question to Messrs. Weinberg, Stern, Huff and the British Film Institute. If one has a bibliography one can go to a library and consult the books it lists. But if one has an iconography of films, one can go nowhere to consult the films mentioned; half of them have been lost for good. Is anyone getting round, not only to preserving such old films as remain, but to reproducing them on 16 mm. so that all can study them?

Soviet Cinema. Herbert Marshall. The Russia Today Society. 1945. 1*s*.

This is a short history of the pre-war Soviet cinema, followed by an account of the Soviet cinema during the war, with an appendix on future plans. There are useful notes on the training of film technicians, on the organisation of the Russian film industry, on the use of 16 mm., on censorship, on colour, stereoscopy and dubbing. The book would have been a deal more interesting if it had been a little more critical and a little less naïve. For example, we do not believe that the statement, "N. Doling is engaged on preliminary work for a film on biology to be called *The Law of Love*, a film demonstrating the maternal instinct, the feeling of parental loyalty in the animal world," is the happiest way to describe the plans for a new scientific film; nor do we learn much more about stereoscopy by being told that the screen is "composed of 36,000 very thin copper wires running in different directions in conformity with certain calculations". Finally, with only eight pages of illustrations, was it necessary to take up space with a portrait of the author?

FILMING THE

By Captain Donald Bull

A British Staff Officer with the Film and Photographic Section of SHAEF

Five and a half million feet of film, turned by 500 cameramen belonging to more than twenty different services and Government departments . . . this was the coverage and the camera force employed in the most lavishly equipped and planned photographic campaign in history. The decision of SHAEF before D-day to establish central censorship funnelled this large volume of film, in the space of one year, on to a single screen in Davies Street, and provided a unique opportunity to study side by side the methods and achievements of the units and cameramen involved.

The aim was high—to survey the whole field of coverage of the SHAEF operation, to allocate this great camera force with economy and efficiency, to secure complete recording of every phase of the operation, both front-line and rear echelon. The achievement fell short by a long way, but in its way it was great, too.

It was intended that lessons learnt in earlier campaigns—the chief one being the North African—would be applied with profit to the European campaign. Mistakes brought about by dual authority, by an inadequate system of briefing, would be avoided. The methods used were much the same as in the previous campaign: the use of small combat camera teams attached to formations as necessary, working under their P. and P.W. officers, very mobile, able to tie on to any formation that looked as if it were doing something interesting and record what was going on; the use of special coverage units, briefed from a higher organisation, such as SHAEF, the War Office or the War Department, to secure broader and more organised footage on particular subjects; free use of newsreel photographers to shoot as and how they pleased, to satisfy their own particular requirements.

U.S. Cameramen

From the beginning, the scene was dominated by the vast numbers of American service cameramen sent into the field. After the admittedly poor results achieved in North Africa, the Americans turned to the statistical, or herring-spawn, method. The idea was that every formation from army group downwards should have a given degree of coverage, ensured by the attachment of a given camera force to operate within the area of that particular formation. With a certain amount of reshuffling, this system held from D-day to VE-day. There is no doubt that it yielded results. The U.S. War Department now possesses an unsurpassed record of its army's activities in Europe. There is a certain scientific basis for the method, too; since the shooting of combat action is largely a matter of chance, and 400 cameramen have a better chance of securing the unique, symbolic shot of war than a handful. In the event, at least 3½ million feet of the total was turned by American service and newsreel cameramen. In terms of efficiency the story is not so good. Even from the point of view of historical record, which has a very wide frame of reference, a large amount of this footage was waste, or unnecessary duplication. But, as was so often heard "what's a couple of million feet of wasted film when there's a war on, and history being irrevocably made? Hollywood shoots a million feet on a small B production" . . . etc. The answer no doubt is that in war there are few opportunities for retakes, and a cameraman shooting unnecessarily is missing something important somewhere else.

Small British Camera Force

The British had a very small camera force, and it had to be constantly deployed, using great mobility and a high degree of contact with its briefing authorities. Technically, it suffered in the early days from camera trouble, and although this mended with experience, the small number of cameras available was never able even to attempt a broad full picture of the British part in the operation. Also, cameramen seemed starved of film, and undershot their stories. The technical quality was never high. It reached peaks touched by the best, but never reached the general standard of the U.S. service cameramen, who also had a prolonged groggy start. The war's operations were covered thinly, and for immediate purposes, such as newsreel and topical film use, adequately. But the War Office does not possess the complete record it might have had of the British Army's contribution. In particular it suffered from an almost complete blackout on its rear echelon. There just weren't enough cameras to shoot the great number of important subjects that the army left in its wake.

Many other small units were in the field. The Canadians had a tiny force, and were content largely to provide hometown pictures of their troops—on leave, playing football, giving Christmas parties to the kids, parading and whatnot. They were starved of cameras and directorial ability. This is a matter for surprise, when one considers that under Grierson a group of documentary directors had been trained in Canada, who might well have been permitted to come to Europe and use their talents to record the work of their own army.

The Air Forces

The Air Force stuff was of course superb, the best work being done by the U.S. 8th Air Force with its remarkable wing camera material of strafing. The R.A.F. and the U.S. 9th Air Force continued the work we were familiar with before D-day—high-level daylight bombing, and of course in the case of the R.A.F. the wonderful night mass bombing material. The R.A.F. developed to a remarkable pitch its technique of photographing night bombing.

The Navies naturally started with a good flow of material, but this petered out after the initial phases were over. It was never of very high quality, but here the statistical chance of being on the right ship at the right time defeated the relatively small camera force involved.

European Camera Crews

The Dutch, in the persons of Wassenberg, Ferno and Out, turned in a fine documentary coverage of the condition of their devastated land during and after the fighting. The Norwegians made the finest and most dashing coverage of a commando operation—the Walcheren landings. The French Army, coming late in the day, did poorly, with few and ill-trained cameramen. The Poles, briefly and sporadically, sent in some amazing stuff, particularly on the first action of its armoured division, but did not sustain this level. The Czechs tried a full-length documentary in 16 mm. colour of its holding operation at Dunkirk, but achieved nothing to justify the use of this technique.

The Special Coverage Units operating directly under SHAEF, but responsible to various allied government departments and services, were mainly concerned in showing various aspects of civilian life in liberated territories, and the activities of civil affairs and military government authorities.

EUROPEAN CAMPAIGN

Their work did not justify the first rate facilities and opportunities they disposed of. In the case of the Americans, the directorial ability seemed drawn largely from Hollywood sources, and was not adapted to the type of shooting involved. Reed and Roffman did some fine work for the Canadian National Film Board, but not for long.

Where was Documentary ?

And where were the British documentary directors? The sad fact must be recorded that, with all its wealth of talent, a trained and fully equipped personnel which no other country can boast, the British documentary movement failed—as an independently operating organisation—to show much sign that it existed at all. Ralph Elton, Jack Lee and a few others, paid short visits to the continent, seemed to find things too much for them, and came back. The responsibility cannot be laid at their door. Roy Boulting, of the Army Film Unit, operating under precisely the same conditions, shared their ill-success. An inquest into the reasons for this failure cannot find space in this article. Those who did participate have been discreetly silent. Till further evidence is available, an open verdict is hereby recorded.

Brilliant Work

The most impressive work done by the newsreel cameramen was achieved when the liberation of Paris also liberated the talents of the brothers Mejato and Gaston Madru. This astonishing trio were snapped up by the U.S. newsreel companies, and proceeded to do the most consistently brilliant work of any individual cameramen in the campaign. Madru, who filmed in the last days of occupied Paris from a camera concealed in a carrier basket on a bicycle, and was killed by a sniper's bullet in the street fighting in Leipzig, deserves a memorial plaque on the wall of every newsreel association in the world. The other newsreel cameramen were not enterprising, and in comparison with the sustained brilliance of the three Frenchmen, paltry. They shot for the newsreels, instead of for the record. They are not used to giving a rounded story, but just a few, frequently well-chosen, shots. The Americans were better than the English—Lieb's work with Patton's army and in Paris was excellent.

In the final analysis, planning and numbers were lesser factors than individual ability. The most detailed planning was given to the coverage of the D-day phase, and this certainly resulted in a splendid and historic achievement, the highlight of which was the automatic coverage taken by the cameras attached to some of the landing craft—the 300 ft. which survived. But when the operation went out of the planned stage and became as it were hand-to-mouth, the coverage dropped at once in quality. From then on, the watchers of the Davies Street screen came to recognise a few names as being associated with good work, some few dozen service cameramen who had profited by their training in Astoria or Pinewood, and who, left on their own with a minimum of briefing, would turn in footage of value. The moral is surely, that, assuming as it can be assumed, that the training of these service recruits was of a high standard, more care should have been taken in selection of eligible trainees. In general, it can be said that British service cameramen showed a strongly developed directorial and pictorial sense most often lacking in their U.S. counterparts, but this was very much off-set by far weaker technical ability.

SHAEF tried hard

SHAEF made an honest attempt to envision the total picture of coverage, but had not the power to put its vision into practice. As before, after the undoubted achievements of D-day, SHAEF fell back into its legal rôle of adviser and provider of facilities. The story of previous campaigns was retold. Many authorities meant lack of central control. Individual services had facilities and authorisation from SHAEF, and had to submit to SHAEF censorship. In between, they were under the control, the rigid and jealously guarded control, of the War Department, War Office, Army Groups, Government Departments, and such institutions as the Signal Corps, etc. SHAEF which might have played on the whole instrument as a conductor with an orchestra, was too high up, remote, and tactful to display its full powers. Inasmuch as SHAEF was the first authority to see all the footage, it was in a position to send out to the field a picture of the overall coverage, to comment and advise on gaps, over-shooting, quality, and so forth. Such directives were sometimes used, in most cases disregarded. SHAEF could not know the local difficulties, often all-important. Units were too close to their own problems, and anxious to satisfy their immediate masters, who could hand out penalties as well as worthwhile rewards.

Inadequate ?

The use of this wealth of material, which cost so much pains and so many lives, can only be described as miserably inadequate. The newsreels, with two 700-ft. issues a week, only part of which could be devoted to the fighting on the Western Front, accounted at a generous estimate for about 50,000 ft. or less than 1 per cent. Other films made can be counted on the fingers of one hand. *Left of the Line* and *A Harbour goes to France* were timely and good. By the time of writing *The True Glory* has not yet been seen. And of course there was wide use of the material for specialist purposes, overseas reels, training and industrial morale films, etc. But the public was deprived by commercial, and, be it said, diplomatic considerations, from the running pictorial record of the war to which it has a right, and which by all the tokens, it had an intense desire to see. A great mistake in the opinion of the writer was made when the decision was reached to make one film of the whole campaign.

What might have been

Circumstances merited a series of great films depicting succeeding phases of the campaign. Anyone can sketch these out for himself: prelude to D-day and the initial landings; the Normandy Campaign up to the taking of Cherbourg; the clearing of Brittany and the swoop on Paris; Caen, the Boscages, and the Falaise gap; the Seine crossings and the liberation of Brussels; Arnhem; the liberation of Alsace-Lorraine; the Channel Ports; the Ardennes counter-offensive; the battle of the Roer; the battle of the Rhine and the final collapse. It's all there, in detail, in 5½ million feet of film. And now it's all dead as mutton. One reason, apart from the usual political difficulties of making joint films, is a perfection complex on the part of those using the film, which seemed to hamstring any attempt to finish films before their topicality lapsed. Crudities should have been unimportant. The great thing was to get the stuff on the world's screens—a technique would have developed as we went along.

Treasure-trove for Editors

Well, there it all is, in a myriad of cans in Washington, New York, London, Paris, a fine record and a treasure-trove for future users. What will happen to all the film-millions of feet which the public will never see, but millions also which will be called on in the years to come, to remind us of our madness and greatness? The hearts of future editors, who will have the task of securing the one shot they need out of the ocean of celluloid, need not drop, for there is a word of cheer. For the first time, a comprehensive documentation was undertaken, as the film came in, using the opportunities provided by central screening. As a result, the work of researching into the film records of the European fighting will be immeasurably lightened. Anyone who wants film taken of a particular town, type of action, subject, person, can find it in the catalogues and indices which SHAEF prepared. Private records of the quality of the material exist, and remain private. This at least SHAEF has done for the eventual users of the film. What could it not have done for the makers!

Documentary News Letter

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NEW DOCUMENTARY FILMS

Your Children's Eyes. Realist F.U. for M.O.I. *Producer:* John Taylor. *Direction:* Alec Strasser. C.F.L. 19 mins.
Subject: The care of children's eyes. A film for parents.
Treatment: The film falls into three parts—physiology of the eye; how the eye works and causes of long and short sight; diseases of the eye. The physiology of the eye is most ingeniously demonstrated by using an orange as a model, whose function and analogy to the eye are interpreted by a conjurer. Indeed, the effect, completely successful, is so purely of the cinema that it is difficult to describe. Long and short sight are explained, by blackboard drawings, set out by a schoolmaster who is shown taking a class. Though the treatment here is more conventional, the very roughness of the chalk drawing with the intentness of the child audience, compels concentration on the part of those watching the film. The last part of the film, sensitively made though it is, seems dull in comparison with the scenes which precede it.
Propaganda Effect: The film perhaps attempts too much, and the novelty of the opening scenes inevitably tends to kill the effect of the later scenes. Even so, the film is a most striking one, and we hope the technique it displays will be extended and developed in other health films. The first part, if detached from the rest, might be converted into an excellent elementary physiology teaching film for children.

A Mamprusi Village. M.O.I. *Direction:* John Page. C.F.L. 19 mins.
Subject: Village life in West Africa.
Treatment: The film resolutely shoulders the white man's burden. The coloured men are shown as gay, childlike, amiable, irresponsible, happy and carefree—just simple noble savages. As for diseases or hunger, well, they're too much like children to notice such things. Perhaps they are thankful to their masters and die; or perhaps they are never diseased or hungry: one simply is not told. However, within its terms of reference, which evidently excluded any treatment of anything save the innocuous, the film is pleasant and informative enough. The characters are sympathetically handled; something of their legal system is demonstrated; self government under the chiefs is said to be going to lead to full self government one day; it is explained that the chiefs are no longer allowed to rob their followers.
Propaganda Effect: If shown to children, this film will convince them that coloured people are totally different from white people, for it is not explained that many of the differences are superficial, and the outcome of climate or locality, or that many of our customs seem just as peculiar to coloured people as theirs do to us. The film will cut no ice in America, for it will merely confirm the views of the anti-negroes, and look like evasiveness to the others. Think again, M.O.I. Think again, Colonial Office.

The Story of Money. *Production:* Gryphon Films for Banking Information Service. *Direction:* Charles De Lautour. *Camera:* Charles Marlborough. *Producer:* Donald Taylor. C.F.L. 12 mins.
Subject: How modern currencies, banking and the cheque system have been evolved from primitive barter tokens.
Treatment: The film traces the evolution of the coin, the cheque and the modern bank with all its complex ramifications by means of a number of ingenious sequences of prints, museum specimens and actuality scenes. The treatment is in the style of *The Story of the Wheel* an early documentary which substituted simplicity and imagination for the ponderous historical treatment ordinarily accorded to such subjects. Both films remind us how much a good cameraman can achieve with how little; and that the atmosphere of a distant period in history can be as easily achieved by a close-up of hands moving some beautifully time-worn object as by all the costumes which line the shelves of Messrs. Nathans.

The film explains in clear, simple terms the manner in which the modern cheque book has developed from the early Promissory Note and Bill of Exchange. We see some of the ingenuities and complexities of the Clearing House and the Mint.
Propaganda Value: This is a useful educational film which wisely refrains from covering more than its own selected corner of the field of economics. There is a time when one fears that an unsophisticated audience may be sent away with an inflated view of the power and importance of money as such, but the educational balance is restored in the nick of time by a salutary reminder that money is an economic means rather than an economic end.

Soil Erosion. Information Films of India. *Direction:* Kenneth Villiers. *Camera:* Jinaraja Bodhye. *Production:* Ezra Mir. CFL 10 minutes.
Subject: Soil erosion in India, its causes and its cure.
Treatment: A brief pictorial survey of what soil erosion looks like opens the film, which goes on to illustrate its causes and its effect on peasant life. Then we see how it can be combated or avoided. The approach is simple and direct but the film would have made its points more clearly if there had not been so many changes of visual. The shots themselves were good but there was a tendency to try and cram too many of them in. Timing was the main fault of this extremely interesting film—a little less commentary, fewer shots held for a longer time, would have improved it enormously.

It was rather a large subject for one reel and it would perhaps have been better done in two parts of a reel each. But as one so seldom wants to see more of a film this criticism is in itself a sign that the film was good.
Propaganda Value: Soil erosion is a world problem. This film does a good job by putting India into the world picture.

he Movement of the Tongue in Speech.
roduction: Realist F.U. for I.C.I. *Slow-motion hotography:* Kodak Research Laboratory. *dviser:* D. B. Fry. 13 minutes.
eviewed by Sir Richard Paget, F.P.S., F.I.P.
ubject: Movements of the human tongue and ps during speech as seen in a male patient with art of his right cheek removed by a surgical peration. Technicolor shots at normal speed are sociated with black and white shots of the same tion, speeded up 40 times.
reatment: A somewhat gruesome film, but of eat technical interest. The first instance (it is elieved) in which the actual movements of the ngue have been made visible. Only the more rward movement can be seen, as the portion of e patient's cheek which has been removed only extends a little over one inch from the corner of his mouth. But many points of interest to students of phonetics and articulation are disclosed. Thus the backward curvature of the tongue in forming the English I, and the withdrawal of the tongue as a whole to form the backward closures (K. G. and ng) can be actually seen, though the final closure and release are hidden.

The longitudinal growing of the tongue in articulating sh is made visible, as also the "pantomimic" upward and downward movement of the tongue in articulating the word "high". Slow motion pictures of some of the words articulated are also shown. In each case the voice of the commentator is heard giving the words which the patient then repeats after him.
Propaganda Value: For instructional purposes it would be of advantage if the film could be supplemented by a short preliminary statement, together with a cartoon film showing a complete vertical section of a mouth and throat (as seen from the right) so that the relation between the movements actually shown in the film and the various accompanying movements (not visible) might be made clear.

The importance of good articulation needs to be stressed in all teaching of English speech. This film is a notable achievement, and should be the forerunner of a series of cartoon films derived from X-ray and other observations, showing the movements of articulation and the gestural relationship between the short words in English (and indeed in all languages) and the fundamental meanings which they convey.

TALES FOR CHILDREN

Five Films for Odeon Children's Clubs reviewed

ECENTLY a programme of five experimental films for children was shown to an adult idience. These films, made for the Odeon hildren's Clubs, are described as entertainent, not education, and are produced by J. A. ank's Advisory Council on Children's Enterinment films, in collaboration with the chil-en's Film Department of G.B.I.

These are entertainment films of a peculiar nd. Two out of the five would be better desibed as moral lectures and two more have a oral tagged on. The adults were told by Miss ary Field that they might not like all the films, it that did not matter, because the children d. This programme suggests, however, that it is gh time that adults, particularly teachers, nsidered not only whether there is any point making such films for children, but whether ey are not positively harmful.

Tom's Ride produced by G.B.I. is intended o point out that stealing by finding is as bad any other kind of theft". Tom's people, the ry says, cannot afford bicycles both for Tom d his younger sister, so the sister has one. m is jealous and when he finds a full note case, tempted to buy a bicycle with the money. He is rsuaded by his sister that it would be wicked, hands the note case into a police station. ey discover that it belongs to an old lady o is going to town to visit her wounded son. m borrows his sister's bicycle and gets the oney to the old lady just as she discovers her ss at the booking office. She offers Tom a tip t he says "really I couldn't take it for doing little". When he gets home his father gives him talking to and points out that he would not ve enjoyed riding a bicycle bought with the d lady's money.

Certainly children must learn not to steal. t surely things like that can only be taught to ildren by people they respect and in terms of eir own experience and surroundings. They uld hardly respect the adults in this film. e situation represented in *Tom's Ride* appears be quite unreal. Tom's people are shown as ing in a comfortable middle-class house. looks as if they could afford a second bicycle yway. Or if they had any common sense, ving given a bicycle to the younger child, they would have found some other outlet for Tom's energies. Tom and his sister are unnatural, priggish children. "What normal child would refuse a reward," said a teacher in the audience.

The children who see these films are encouraged to write their view to the cinema manager, Judging by some of their criticisms, which were read out as an introduction to the film, they were reacting against the unreal atmosphere of the film. "The sister wouldn't have had a bicycle unless she had further to go to school than her brother," was a comment.

Sports Day produced by G.B. Screen Services goes one further in moral uplift, priggishness and snob appeal. Here the main moral is, don't tell tales about your friends, with a subsidiary moral about being kind to animals. Colonel and Mrs. House, who live in a big fine house, have a little dog. Two boys at the nearby secondary-cum-public school tie a tin on its tail on the way to school. The hero releases it but is wrongly accused by the schoolmaster and Colonel House of being the culprit. He shields the other boys and is prevented from taking part in the school sports. At the last minute, owing to the intervention of the hero's very pretty starlet sister, who proves to the colonel that he is innocent, Tom is allowed out just in time to win the swimming competition and the cup for his side.

So virtue is rewarded. But why is a good modern secondary school peopled with boys who appear to have come from one of the less well-known public schools, with parents to match? Why the Colonel and his large house and little dog? Why the sports-master who appears to have stepped straight out of an advertisement for blazers? Because, we were told, the producers wanted to show the children the best social background. Two of the children's criticisms were "Our homes aren't like that," and "Show us children like ourselves". Mary Field agreed that the child actors were too old and sophisticated, but pointed out that it was illegal to employ a child under twelve in a studio. Could there have been some sets left over from a feature film which suggested a cheap studio setting? For we believe there is nothing to prevent pictures being taken of ordinary children in their homes and at school if the L.E.A. agrees.

The best film in the programme was *Club Magazine No.* 3, produced by Wallace Productions. It included items on a visit to the penguins at the Zoo, wartime work of a village blacksmith, the children's art school in Moscow and an exhibition of toys at the Nursery School Association. Foreign versions of this magazine are being made. It does tell children something of the real world and it is proposed to include some aspect of life in another country in each issue—which is a good idea.

Sally the Sparrow produced by G.B.I. was made for the younger children and takes them on a visit to the Zoo. You can hardly go wrong with animals, but this film almost did. The producers thought the bigger animals should be introduced to young children who had never seen them in relation to the sparrow which they all know. We visit the animals with Sally, who flies into their cages to get food. The commentary, in verse, suggests that Sally shouldn't take other animals' food, but wait until she is fed by the children. This gives the sparrow a distorted humanised character. For if there is one bird who can successfully pinch crumbs from under the nose of the lion it is the sparrow. I thought the sparrow spoilt an otherwise useful film.

Finally there was a cartoon. The children ask for a cartoon in their programmes, preferably in colour. If that is the only reason for showing one, why not show them Disney or a Popeye instead of *Robbie Finds a Gun*. This slow black-and-white cartoon was produced by Analysis Films with drawings by Anson Dyer. Robbie the Rabbit gets into trouble when he exchanges his catapault for a gun, and ends up in a pond. A simple cautionary tale for the younger children.

The Advisory Council on Children's Entertainment films will no doubt improve on this first experimental selection. But whatever happens, even if the element of snob morality decreases in future productions, it is most important that teachers should see these films as a matter of course. For whether the children like them or not, it is an adult responsibility to decide whether they are doing a good job.

New Documentary Films

(continued from p. 93)

Time and Tide. Paul Rotha Productions for M.O.I. *Editing:* Jack Elliott. C.F.L. 15 mins.

Bailey Bridge. Merlin Productions for M.O.I. *Direction:* Arthur Barnes. C.F.L. 11 mins.

Subjects: The design and application of the Bailey Bridge. Marine salvage.

Treatment: Films Division has made a practice since its beginning of commissioning simple films, each explaining some aspect of the war. By now there must be scores of them, and the units have not only kept up a high general standard of production, but usually manage to add some imaginative touch of exposition to each, which makes the difference between a humdrum job and a film of quality. *Bailey Bridge* and *Time and Tide* are not exceptions. The former contains an interview with Bailey, who demonstrates the principles of his invention with matchboxes. To see this is not only satisfying and amusing in itself, but one understands once and for all what the bridge is and why it has been important. The rest of the film, an almost too plainly photographed account of the process of erecting the bridge, gains correspondingly in interest. *Time and Tide* shows the raising and beaching of a small vessel sunk in harbour by the enemy. This time the process is explained with the help of homely and crude models of the simplest kind. They are used as one might use a salt cellar and pepper pot on the dinner table in order to explain a military manoeuvre. The effect is not only to interpret what might be obscure, but to enhance the effect of the other scenes which, in this case, are exceptionally well shot, though the action seems to have been covered insufficiently. However, gaps in continuity are neatly bridged in the editing, which is generally effective. The whole is busy, bustling, human and exciting.

Broken Dykes. M.O.I. and Netherlands Information Bureau. *Direction:* John Ferno. M.O.I. Theatrical release for August. 15 mins.

Subject: When the British captured Antwerp from the landward side, German batteries on the island of Walcheren still commanded the approach to the harbour, which could not be used until they had been dislodged. The R.A.F. breached the dykes by bombing. The island was flooded and the Germans forced to evacuate. The people and their animals were marooned and had to be rescued.

Treatment: John Ferno is surely one of the foremost documentary director-cameramen in the world. His photography in *The Four Hundred Million* and *Spanish Earth* will not be forgotten, and *Broken Dykes* is a worthy successor to these two famous films. It is a simple and closely observed account of the sufferings and fortitude of scores of Dutch families. The streets of their towns and villages have become sea-lanes requiring not only boats, but pilots who know the set of the current and the position of drowned land mines; the whole island has gone back to be at the bottom of the North Sea, and the houses are merely rocks sticking up. All this and much more Ferno has recorded in a film which will be remembered when lots of others will have been junked. It contains as sympathetically photographed scenes of people as have ever been taken, and the faces of the people are the faces which Rembrandt and Breugel saw and recorded.

Propaganda Effect: One can learn more about the sufferings of Europe from this film than from most of the newspaper accounts rolled together.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

CANADIAN AND U.S. PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED

Agriculture and Consumer; Social Planning; Canada and the World at War; Education; 4 Film Catalogues published by the National Film Board of Canada. 1945.

Canada in Action. Film Discussion Notes Nos. 1, 2a, B *and* D. The Canadian Council of Education in Citizenship. 1942–45.

A Guide to Film Forums. National Film Board of Canada. 1945.

Labour's Film Forum. Vol. 2, No. 6. National Film Board of Canada. 1945.

How to Stage a Film Show. The National Film Society of Canada, 1942; reprinted in 1945.

The Arts in Canada and the Film. National Film Board of Canada. 1945.

Children of the City. British Information Services, New York. 1945.

The Fifth Year. British Information Services. New York. 1945.

THE WARMEST admirer of the M.O.I. Films Division could not give it much credit for the publications it has issued or inspired, for there have been none, except a dim booklet on *The Silent Village* and a pleasantly got up book of stills published some years ago. Judging by the luxurious style and the huge circulations of the books published under the auspices of the Publications Division of the M.O.I. lack of paper cannot be the reason for the silence of Films Division, and one is forced to conclude that Films Division is uninterested. Yet surely it is the duty of a department, spending tens of thousands of pounds each year on producing good non-theatrical films and on running an efficient and far-reaching service of mobile projectors, to spend a few hundreds on printing and circulating material to help the public make the best possible use of the services available?

Apart from anything else, it is astonishing that Films Division, which has to its credit one of the most imaginative and important non-theatrical film schemes in the world, should be so inarticulate about its own most notable achievement. Here is something of interest to every educator, administrator, Local Government Official, Welfare Worker, parson and Trade Union Official in the country, let alone hundreds of thousands of citizens in every walk of life. Yet so far as we know, Films Division has never published a single considered statement about the theory and practice of non-theatrical as it affects every man, woman and child in the country. All we get is, year by year, a mimeographed press statement consisting only of statistics set out in the driest possible way. Films Division has its own press office but rarely do the press have an opportunity of learning about non-theatrical programmes.

Is Films Division above learning from the excellent Canadian pamphlets listed above, or even from the excellent pamphlets put out by its own offices in New York? For non-theatrical requires more than the enthusiasm of its regional film officers and the silent loyalty of the growing band of 23,000,000 people who attend its films each year. Films—for all the enthusiasm of 23,000,000 people—are not deposited on people's doormats like a newspaper. Their efficient and economical use requires, at least, attractive subject catalogues and discussion notes.

The Canadian subject catalogues, each with a distinctive cover of its own, are pleasant to the eye. Inside, the pages are well laid out with succinct synopses. But the most interesting set of publications are those for "film forums" or discussion groups. The *Canada in Action* series discuss one, two or more films in each issue. Each film is analysed; there are maps when necessary; notes on what to look for in each film are supplied; there is a list of suggested topics for discussion, with a bibliography. The organisers of the films forums are invited to fill up a questionnaire in which they can express their opinions on the visual background material accompanying the films. To support the whole scheme, the National Film Board has issued *A Guide to Film Forums* suggesting ways of organising them, and urging everyone to "make motion pictures the centre for your club or community activities". *Labour's Film Forum* is a publication issued monthly for Trade Unions and Labour Groups. *How to Stage a Film Show* consists of practical hints on 16 mm. projection and showmanship.

The Canadian pamphlets listed above not only suggest a penetrating sense of the public use of film which appears to be beyond the grasp of Films Division; they also illustrate the diversity of films now being made in Canada. The finely printed *The Arts in Canada and the Film* describes and illustrates films on traditional songs of Quebec, folk music and handicrafts, Canadian landscape painting and Chinese Art. Coloured illustrations show stills from Norman McClaren's fantasies, development of the technique he invented in *Love on the Wing* made for the British G.P.O. in 1937. We learn, too, that Alexieff, creator of the celebrated *Night on the Bare Mountain* is now working in Canada.

Comparable with the Canadian discussion notes is *Children of the City* issued by the British Library of Information in New York to support the distribution in America of the film of the same title. It is excellently got up, well illustrated, with a last page of "discussion points". Why has not this booklet been issued in Britain? Or are our own problems too unimportant to present to our own people?

The Fifth Year by the British Library of Information consists of a collection of verse by leading British poets on various aspects of the war, illustrated by stills from M.O.I. films.

Though Films Division has so far ignored, even disdained the creating of a public conversant with the theory and practice of non-theatrical, and it has hampered its own work for lack of active, articulate and critical audience groups, kept supplied with discussion notes and questionnaires, it is still not too late to begin. Can a start be made forthwith?

Film Societies

he London Scientific Film Society has been sing a questionnaire system for its last two easons to try to determine the audience's opinion f one film in each programme presented. This eason's results are now being analysed and col- ted with those of other Scientific Film Societies ho also took part in the scheme—about 3,000 eople in all.

A standardised form is issued to each person ntering the cinema. It contains a number of uestions, and a series of alternative answers to ch question. During the interval the audience asked to fill in the questionnaire about the lm it has just seen, by underlining what is con- dered the most appropriate reply to each ques- on. The forms are then collected, the replies ntered on a chart, and a percentaged summary ade out.

The analysis of last season's results is now eing prepared for publishing, and plans for next eason are in hand. It is possible that a radically fferent type of questionnaire may be used with ms specially made to get answers to questions n the subjective impact of film techniques. If ny documentary producers or directors have uestions of this kind, to which a useful answer ight be obtained from audiences such as those scientific film societies, they are invited to mmunicate with the Audience Reaction Com- ittee, London Scientific Film Society, c/o cademy Cinema, 165 Oxford Street, W.1.

At a show on June 8th, Leeds Scientific Film ociety heard an address by Sir Robert Watson- att, C.B., F.R.S., and saw the film supervised by m, *Water in the Air*. Other films shown were *arbour goes to France*, *Soil Erosion*, *Chemistry Fire* and *Children's Charter*.

Correspondence

R,

our valuable leading article on "The Future of e Educational Film" contains one suggestion hich we wish to question. In discussing the oduction of specialised films you say " . . . the ational Film Office should be able, in com- issioning films and film strips on behalf of e Ministry of Education as well as for other epartments, to effect more economical, efficient d rapid production for all by using the same mpanies for subjects related in style, treatment, bject and locale." In reviewing the subject year ago we considered this idea in relation to edical films, and suggested that film units ould "not confine themselves exclusively to edicine, but by taking out occasionally into e general run of films some of the precision ey have learnt in medicine they will contribute the general trend of film-making and bring lvances back with them into medical films". e feel that the increasing specialisation which uld be forced, with the best of intentions, on film unit, if the proposal you suggest were rried out, would lead in the end to worse and t better films, for the reason discussed by your ntributor Harry Randall in "The Creative rce" in the same issue.

yal Society of Medicine,
1 Wimpole Street,
London, W.1.
th July, 1945.

CEDRIC LONGLAND
RONALD MACKEITH
BRIAN STANFORD

OUR COUNTRY

Excerpts from the commentary, written by Dylan Thomas, and reproduced by courtesy of the Ministry of Information

Glasgow

To begin with
a city
a fair grey day
a day as lively and noisy as a close gossip of sparrows
as terribly impersonal as a sea cavern full of machines
when morning is driving down from the roofs of
buildings
into stone labyrinths and traffic webs
when each man is alone forever in the midst of the
masses of men
and all the separate movements of the morning crowds

London

are lost together in the heartbeat of the clocks
a day when the long noise of the sea is forgotten
street-drowned in another memory
of the sound itself of smoke and sailing dust
trumpets of traffic signs and hoardings and posters
rasp of the red and green signal lights
the scraped string voices of overhead wires
and the owl sound of the dry wind in the tube tunnels
the blare and ragged drumroll of the armies of
pavements and chimneys
and crossings and street walls
the riding choirs of the wheels
the always to be remembered even through continual
sea music
music of the towers and bridges and spires and domes
of the island city.

St. Paul's

There is peace under one roof.
And then birds flying
suddenly easily as though from another country.
And all the stones remember and sing
the cathedral of each blitzed dead body that lay or lies
in the bomber-and-dove-flown-over cemeteries
of the dumb heroic streets.
And the eyes of St. Paul's move over London:
To the crowds of the shunting flagged and whistling clut-
tered cave-hollow other world under glass and steam
the loudspeaking terminus.

* * *

Going out
out over the racing rails in a grumble of London-
leaving thunder
over the maze track of metal
through a wink and a spin of towns and signals and
fields
out
to the edges of the explosive the moon-moved man-
indifferent capsizing sea.

* * *

Felling Trees

Here near at one island end, the north fringe,
walk deep through the forbidding timber temples
count the Samson pillars fall
the thwacks of the wood-and-wind-splintering axe
crack of the trunk-shorn boughs
shuffle of leaves
the suddenly homeless birds' tree-call.
Forget for a second the beckoning sea
that lies at the end of the journey,
commanding your coming back
behind each fated tree.

Aberdeen

To end with
a quayside
a fair grey day
with the long noise of the sea flowing back
as though never in factory or harvestfield
market or timber temple street or hill
it could have been forgotten
for a moment of the tidal movement of man's time
with the call of ships
the monotonous sea voice of the beautiful scavenging
gull
the salt smell strong as sunlight
grease on the deck
the facing of the sea.
To end with
the faces of fishermen.

* * *

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF FILMS PRODUCED BY THE M.O.I. IN 1944.

FOOTAGE OF FILMS

	1940(a)	1941	1942	1943	1944	TOTAL
5-Minute	13,791	25,113	20,141	—	—	59,045
15-Minute	—	—	1,316	15,216	16,041	32,573
General T. Distribution	16,673	9,228	22,506	33,833	17,524	99,764
General N.T. Distribution	23,545	7,890	41,457	24,010	39,572	136,474
Instructional and Training	4,109	10,280	30,522	38,568	18,713	102,192
Mainly Overseas	—	—	16,383	15,081	5,908	37,372
Wholly Overseas	3,100	11,093	22,944	43,155	17,307	97,599
Trailers	1,600	3,000(b)	4,250	5,750(c)	5,500(c)(f)	20,100
TOTAL	62,818	66,604	159,519	175,613	120,565	585,119
Colonial Film Unit Productions	11,919	7,836	13,600(d)	30,198(d)	17,844(d)	81,397
Acquired 5-Minute and 15-Minute films	1,135	6,657	11,353	1,312(e)	—	20,457

(a) Includes 3,130 ft. of T. releases delivered in 1939.
(b) Average length—200 ft.
(c) Average length—125 ft.
(d) 16 mm. productions are calculated at equivalent 35 mm. footage.
(e) 15-minute film.
(f) Excludes three re-issues. Includes 3 issues in Scotland only, and 3 issues in England and Wales only.

NUMBERS OF FILMS

	1940(a)	1941	1942	1943	1944	TOTAL
5-Minute	20	37	29	—	—	86
15-Minute	—	—	1	12	12	25
General T. Distribution	14	5	7	8	5	39
General N.T. Distribution	23	7	35	21	28	114
Instructional and Training	6	12	24	27	13	82
Mainly Overseas	—	—	12	7	6	25
Wholly Overseas	3	10	18	39	15	85
Trailers	8	15	34	46	51(b)	154
TOTAL	74	86	160	160	130	610
Colonial Film Unit Productions	8	10	16	30	36	100
Acquired 5-minute and 15-minute films	2	10	17	1(c)	—	30

(a) Includes two films for T. release delivered in 1939.
(b) Excludes three re-issues, includes three issues in Scotland only, and three issues in England and Wales only.
(c) 15-minute film.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

CONTENTS

OL. 5 1945 Fiftieth Issue PUBLISHED BY FILM CENTRE, 34 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON W.1 ONE SHILLING

QUOTA QUICKIES AGAIN

NE OF the most awful experiences that can happen to a cinema-goer ıese days is to be caught in a cinema waiting for the big film and ave to sit through half an hour of a dud second feature.

There are quite a number of small British companies making ıese films—one shown in the West End the other day didn't have a ıot in it under fifty feet in length and every foot of film that had ɔen shot, including camera flashes and dud pans, had been used. nquiries showed that the total cost of the film was just over £400 ɔr a cut negative of 3,450 ft. The producers' share of the receipts as reckoned to be about £2,000. Another film of this type—a udio production this time—4,000 ft. in length, the subject a detec- ve story, was shot in four days on one set, the set being re-papered ıd redressed each night. The total cost £1,400. In some ways you ın admire the people who make such films when one thinks of the nicky indecision, poor planning and overspending that goes on in a ɔt of studios, but even so this type of film is damaging the industry ıd should be stopped.

But for every film of this type produced in Britain, there must be venty-five produced in America. By the time the dud American :cond features, and this means about 90 per cent of them, arrive ı England, they have paid for themselves three, four, or five times ver, and the distributors can afford to give them away to the :hibitors for practically nothing. In Wardour Street to-day you can uy the British distribution rights of a five-reel American second :ature for £20.

And so we arrive at the reason for the demand for the very ıeapest second features. Films for renters' quota are of course rotected by a cost clause which keeps the standard of the produc- on fairly high, but there is no similar control for exhibitors' quota. uota films are in short supply and the market is flooded with bad merican products at "throw away" prices—so small British com- anies, interested only in the profits, knock reels of junk together hich qualify for exhibitors' quota.

Now what is the feeling of British producers, renters and :hibitors? The big producers are quite happy, because the drearier ıe second feature the less the money it receives and of course the ıore the big pictures take. As production and renting are so closely ed together, the renters are happy too.

But what about the exhibitors? They know that these films drive udiences to sleep and they would rather not show them, but they uy they must in order to make up the quota against all the dud American second features. If you ask them why they have to buy British quota from the gutters they answer "We have to buy in the cheapest market. We're not philanthropists!" You may even ask, "Why show the American second features when no one wants to see them?" but if you do the exhibitor will go white and might possibly have a heart attack, for what you are suggesting is a single feature programme. And although exhibitors know that audiences don't want to see these films, they believe that a single feature programme will keep their "patrons", as they call us, out.

Now how do these British-made junk second features directly harm the industry?

First, production. Decent second features could be an ideal training ground, especially for key technicians such as script writers, directors, cameramen, recordists and editors and, of course, as a try-out ground for actors. (If you are producing a film for a hundred thousand pounds you think twice before giving a promising but untried youngster the job as director, or an unknown actress one of the leading parts. But if one of the big studios, apart from its ordinary production schedule, made, say, five films a year at £15,000 each—£75,000 in all, just the cost of one medium-sized film—they would be making an investment that would be repaid a thousand times over.)

Second, exhibition. Audiences can't be bothered with these films. They cough, talk, go to sleep or walk out, and when you hear some one complaining about British films being bad, it is usually one of these that they are talking about. Which can be summed up as—they give the British production industry a bad name; they discourage people from going to the pictures.

The position to-day is very similar to that in 1938 before the present Quota Act was passed. Then the American distributors were commissioning quota quickies which counted for renters' *and* exhibitors' quota. There was no part of the act which controlled the price or quality of such films, and they very nearly finished the production industry off. It was only the introduction of the cost clause for *renters'* quota in the new Quota Act that saved it. Immediately a renter had to prove to the Board of Trade that £7,500 or £15,000 had been spent on labour, the quality of the films improved immediately. To-day there is no cost clause for *exhibitors'* quota. Judging by past experience it is about time that it was introduced; or, even better, in the next revision of the Quota Act, let us have a clause banning the double-feature programme.

THE B.F.I. PROPOSES—

THE GOVERNORS of the British Film Institute have published their proposals for the organisation and activities of a Visual Education Committee. The Ministry of Education asked them for proposals on October 31st, 1944, and in fact received them by the end of the year. Their publication now in a leaflet* (dated August, 1945) which has been widely circulated comes as something of a surprise. We had thought that they had been discreetly pigeonholed. We believe that publication has also come as a surprise to the Ministry of Education which, as we go to press, has not felt itself compelled to acknowledge the proposals publicly or to take any action on them.

With the general line of the proposals we and, we believe, most people with knowledge of the situation would agree. Obviously there must be a central Committee to direct the development of visual aids in education. Everyone knows that educational film production will have to be financed out of the public funds. As the number of schools using visual aids increases it will be necessary to decentralise distribution, and it will be desirable to attach to the organisations established for this purpose officers with special knowledge and experience of visual aids. But all this organisation the Governors propose should be established within the existing structure of the British Film Institute. The whole policy, administration and activity of the Visual Education Committee would be subject to the control of the Governors of the British Film Institute. The Governors have nominated the organisations that should be entitled to representation on the Committee, and the choice of individuals co-opted so as to form one-third of the Committee would be subject to their approval. The Governors would also be the final judges of which films should be subsidised. The proposed additional staff in London and in the provinces would be appointed by the Governors. To carry out their proposals the Governors would be given £100,000 a year, either by direct grant from the Ministry of Education or by contributions ranking for grant-aid from the L.E.A's.

The Institute's record over the twelve years since it was established makes it impossible, in our view, for the Ministry to accept this proposal. Who else but the Institute would propose for an urgent job a Committee of 78 people with an elaborate system of Sub-Committees? Who else but the Institute would make proposals for subsidising film production and organising film distribution without making any proposals about the production and installation of projectors on which to show the films? What led the Governors to decide on a production programme of 40 reels of films a year at a flat rate of £1,000 a reel? Did the Governors have no misgivings about the wisdom or propriety of making themselves and the Visual Education Committee responsible both for the administration of subsidies to companies making educational films and for organising the appraisal of the films when they are made?

Of the 78 members, 52 would be representatives of organisations. Co-option of individuals from the Subject Associations (Science Masters, Historical, Geographical, etc.), or for their knowledge of visual education, to form one-third only of the Committee would ensure that the members with knowledge were kept in the minority. The list of bodies to nominate representatives includes about everyone you can think of. But what practical help do the Governors expect to get for their Committee from the representatives of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, the Kinematograph Renters' Society, the Federation of British Industries, the National Confederation of Employers or, if it comes to that, the T.U.C.? The government education departments and local education authorities between them have 15 representatives, balanced by 20 from the Teachers' Organisations. Here there are many claimants so most of them (Headmasters' Associatio Headmistresses' Association, Assistant Masters, Assistant Mi tresses and so on) get only one apiece. The Teachers in Trainin Colleges and the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutio are favoured with two each. Why? The N.U.T. gets 6. Why? Amon 8 representatives of the Film Producing interests, the Short Fil Producers' Association is allowed 4 (balancing 4 from the featu part of the Trade) "two Instructional and two Documentary". needs the Institute to draw so precise a distinction between make of instructional and makers of documentary films.

To do the work the Governors propose a smaller Executiv elected with "due regard to the adequate representation of th various constituent groups of the Committee"; and 7 specialise Sub-Committees: (*a*) Physical Education, (*b*) Science, (*c*) Tech nology and Art, (*d*) Humanities, (*e*) Technical, (*f*) Appraisa (*g*) Research, the members of which would be experts appointe individually, but whether from the members of the parent Committe (in which there are only 26 people chosen for their expert knowledge or in addition to them is not clear. The prototype for this kind o Committee is said to be the Central Council for School Broad casting. But surely it is to be found much nearer home, in th system of Advisory Council, Panels and Committees for this, tha and the other which the Institute elaborated twelve years ago In fact, what is proposed is the same old firm under a new name but this time with executive powers and considerable sums o public money entrusted to it.

Administratively, the Governors propose a system by which Sub-Committee draws up proposals, which are then passed up t an Executive, from it to the main Committee, and from it to th Governors who "put forward as soon as possible a series o recommendations of material which is urgently needed to be made" After this it would appear that the Governors wait for film companie to come and say that they are thinking of making films on such an such subjects in the series of recommendations but cannot afford to do so without a subsidy. The Governors ask the companies t submit "extended treatments" and if "in the opinion of the Institute" they seem promising they arrange "to guarantee a market". How the Governors will arrange this or indeed whether this is what they will do is difficult to discover from the leaflet. For while on page 2 the Governors talk of guaranteeing a market, on page 6 they lis under *Annual Subsidies* "40 subjects of one reel a year at £1,00 each: 100 Film Strips at £150 each" and so on. Only the Governor can explain whether this is, as we suspect, an alternative suggestion to guaranteeing a market, details of which they have omitted in editing the proposals for publication. If it is not we should like t know how it is related to guaranteeing a market by, presumably, th sale of prints.

The idea of a guaranteed market was first proposed a yea or so ago by Gaumont-British Instructional. Local educatio authorities were to be asked to undertake to buy copies of film before they went into production so that the production compan could judge whether and at what cost it would pay them to mak films. Is this what the Governors are proposing—that L.E.A.' should be committed to buying something they have not seen on the say-so of the Institute? We cannot find any other interpretatio That the Institute should propose a system which would involv L.E.A.'s in blind-purchase and would promote the production o films of the greatest common denominator at the lowest possibl price is typical. The Governors, as might be expected, make n reference whatever to the production and distribution of films b Government Departments during the war. Yet there is a body o people, in the Ministry of Information and the Services, highl expert in the assessing of scripts and the ordering of production whose experience could be applied to the production of educational

* *Proposals from the British Film Institute to the Ministry of Education for the formation of a Visual Education Committee.*

films for the Ministry of Education. The Institute has no experience of this kind nor will the Governor's proposed Committee provide it.

We are not concerned at this stage to elucidate the obscurities and examine in detail the proposed arrangements for distribution through local and Regional Film Libraries and for Regional Staffs to be attached to the Institute. If we were we should like to know whether by "self-supporting" film libraries the Governors mean libraries that restrict their stock and services to what they can provide from the income they receive from film-hire, and if so whether such libraries will meet the needs of schools. We should like to know, too, why the staff and expenditure proposed for each of the Regions is the same, whereas the areas and the number of schools within them vary greatly and so therefore would the size of each library and the amount of work to be done. Greater London and the four North-Western counties, two of the ten "Regions", cover between them almost two-thirds of the population of England.

But these things can wait until there is an immediate prospect of films being made and projectors being installed in schools. Neither will result from the proposals put forward by the Governors of the British Film Institute. For our part, we have already formulated what we believe to be the proper method of making and distributing educational films, in *The Future of the Educational Film* (D.N.L. Vol. V, No. 48). In brief, since the production of educational films must be financed out of public money the Ministry must assume direct responsibility for production and for maintaining proper relations with the local authorities and the teachers. To advise it the Ministry should set up a small and effective Advisory Council on Visual Aids composed of individuals chosen for their knowledge and reputation, with a permanent staff. For carrying out its plans it should work through Films Division of the Ministry of Information or the Film Office which may take its place and thus avail itself of the experience gained there and in the Services. When the Ministry has put this work in hand and also tackled the problems of projectors for schools it should then turn its attention to the British Film Institute. There will be a need for an independent, authoritative body to examine, appraise, and criticise the work the Ministry is doing and to help local authorities and teachers to make the best use of the films and other visual aids produced by the Ministry. The importance of such a body, having behind it the informed opinion of groups all over the country, cannot be over-estimated. It is what the British Film Institute was established to become, and has failed to become, for reasons which are as well-known to the Institute itself as they are to the Ministry of Education.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

Technician or Artist?

THE *Interim Report of the Technical Standards Committee*, published by the Association of Cine-Technicians in August, takes an important step towards combining trade unionism with the qualities of a professional association or a learned society. Inter-departmental lectures are proposed so that one section of the industry can be led to understand the work of another; visits are to be arranged to studios and laboratories; a library of books and films is recommended; most importantly the committee hopes that there will presently be a club with premises of its own and facilities for projection. These proposals are admirable, but we feel that they have not gone far enough. In the first place, no attention seems to have been paid to distribution, though distribution is as much a part of film making as production, and A.C.T. members ought to make themselves familiar with its ramifications. In the second place the committee seems to regard film technicians mainly as craftsmen rather than as artists and creators. Yet, if our film industry is to take its place firmly alongside the other great cultural institutions of our country, the film workers will require more than higher technical standards. They must also put themselves on an equal footing with the leading poets, musicians, architects and painters of the day. It is as important, for example, for film workers to have an opportunity of hearing T. S. Eliot reading his own poetry, as it is for them to visit Denham Studios. The report does not mention electricians, carpenters or plasterers. Yet these are as essential to film making as anyone else. The sooner they are encouraged to feel themselves equals beside the laboratory workers, the production staff and the camera crews, the better.

Post-War Jobs

WE WELCOME one of the most important series of films so far undertaken by the Ministry of Information. The subject of the series is *Post-War Jobs* and the films are obviously assured of a large and interested audience. The object of each film is to report, factually and without bias either way, on a certain job, and to show what the job is, with notes on conditions of work and future prospects. The list of projected titles is a long one and ranges from the building trade, via catering, civil engineering, furniture making and the distributive trades, to office and domestic work. If the Ministry keeps up the high standard set by the first three, *Farm Worker* (reviewed in *D.N.L.* Vol. V, 84th issue, p. 77), *Teaching* and *What's the Next Job?*, they will have done one fine post-war job themselves.

Films for Parents

THREE Ministry of Health films for parents—*Your Children's Teeth* (reviewed in our previous issue), *Your Children's Eyes* and *Your Children's Ears* (both reviewed in this issue) represent the first serious attempt at presenting detailed medical information to lay audiences. Various home encyclopaedias have been doing it for years but their information is often scrappy and more on the lines of Tom Sawyer's cure for warts, than accurate information that would be helpful to a mother with a sick child. These three films have not made the fatal mistake of underestimating their audiences; they deal fully with their subject and the pamphlets which go with them will serve as a reminder in a time of trouble. We congratulate the Ministry of Health and hope they will use these films as a basis for a comprehensive series covering the whole field of child health.

The King's English

THE Ministry of Information records films in Chinese and Malay, Spanish and Brazilian, French and Russian, Swedish and Italian, and many other languages. Yet we understand that never, since the beginning of the war, has a single Afrikaans version of an M.O.I. film been available for non-theatrical use in South Africa. America supplies plenty of such films. If the King's English is good enough for Kensington, it's good enough for the Cape, what?

D.N.L. Reviews

OCCASIONALLY the suggestion is made that film reviews appearing in *D.N.L.* should be signed. The policy of the Editorial Board is that *D.N.L.* should maintain a self-critical attitude towards documentary attainments, no less than a readiness to spot-light its successes. This outlook, fundamental to documentary itself, is reflected in the manner of presentation of the film reviews in the *News Letter*. Commonly a film is reviewed by an individual selected by the Board. By the fact of its being published, unsigned, such a review is endorsed by the Board as being what it considers a valid point of view about that film. Often the review is written by a Board member, in which case clearly it is appropriate that it be unsigned. If a review is signed the implication is that it is an expression of a personal opinion with which the Board does not necessarily wholly associate itself.

THE PARIS SCIENTIFIC FILM CONFERENCE

In 1934, M. Jean Painlevé and Doctor Claoué inaugurated an annual series of scientific film conferences in Paris. The seventh of this series, interrupted by the war, took place on October 12th, 13th and 14th at the Palais de Chaillot. This Congress was arranged by the Institut de Cinématographie Scientifique and was supported by the Association pour la Documentation Photographique et Cinématographique dans les Sciences, an organisation with some ten thousand members in France. British non-theatrical films were an important element in the programmes. Below, John Maddison, who represented The Ministry of Information and the Scientific Film Association at the Congress, gives some impressions of the occasion.

THE French cinema, from first impressions, appears to have preserved much of its liveliness and power of improvisation. Conversations and press reports made it clear that its greatest problem remains the lack of studio space and materials. This was underlined by the note of tragedy in prevailing comments on the fire which, a day or two before, had destroyed the larger part of the important Victorine Studios, the only ones on the Mediterranean Coast. Valuable sound recording equipment had been lost but elaborate settings for Duvivier's film *Panique* had escaped. Jean Renoir's *La Règle du Jeu*, banned by the Germans in 1940, had reappeared the week before, and had been withdrawn for lack of commercial success. I did not see it, but everyone agreed that it was an unconventional and intensely personal film, more violent in form than *La Bête Humaine*. Indeed one critic described it as the most violent work seen in the French cinema in fifty years. Among films showing at first-run houses were Bresson's *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, a stylised but tawdry intrigue, in spite of a script by Cocteau, and Carné and Prévert's *Les Enfants du Paradis*, begun under the Occupation, a story of Paris in 1840, and a film to note.

My first contact with Jean Painlevé, my host at the Congress, was through a paragraph in an evening paper announcing that he had been attacked by a vampire! Later in the day, he himself smilingly gave me the facts in his cinema laboratory in the basement of the Arts et Métiers Science Museum. He had just finished a short interest film about a real vampire, which had proved a little difficult to handle. This film *Le Vampire* was shown at the end of the Congress. After opening with a sequence devoted to strange beasts and marine creatures which have given rise to myths and legends, Painlevé uses material from Murnau's silent film *Nos Feratu* to introduce a realistic study of this rare and terrible animal attacking its victim, a South American rodent. The commentary to the film is witty and at times macabre and the accompanying jazz melody is haunting and melancholic. The whole thing is a *jeu d'esprit* in the French manner and would serve as an interesting contrast to a Secrets of Nature film in any Film Society programme.

The son of a former Prime Minister of France, Painlevé is an interesting character. He gave up medical studies for films and one may best describe him as a scientist who has fallen in love with the cinema. During the occupation, he was an active member of the Resistance but took no part in film-making. In 1944, after Paris was liberated, he was appointed Director General of the French Cinema Industry. Earlier this year, he left this post to take over the Institute Cinématographie Scientifique in order to devote himself to experimental cinematography. His interests there include research into stereoscopy with a triple vibrating wire screen, and the development of a standard projector with a cooling system efficient enough to give with safety a fairly brilliant still picture even when using flammable stock. French technicians have perfected a substandard cinecamera operating at 5,000 frames per second, and I watched Painlevé filming with it the dissolution of a glass bottle under the impact of a rifle shot. He projected the negative of it later and this short sequence was very striking.

Painlevé maintains (and it is a contention with which our Scientific Film Association strongly agrees) that scientific methods ought to be used in a more organised way to lead to improvements in cinematography itself. To quote his own words, there should be research "pour le film" as well as "par le film". Apart from the work done by commercial laboratories, he looks forward to the establishment of a State Research Centre investigating such problems as stereoscopy and colour and the improvement of emulsions and lenses, etc. The fact that out of 33 films presented at the Congress, only one came within this category of research appeared lamentable to him. This was a film demonstrating a method for faking backgrounds called *Simplifilm*. It was presented by its inventor, Dufour, with all the enthusiasm of a compatriot of Melies but without the rare sense of décor of that genius. *Simplifilm* uses a metal chamber, containing a special optical system, placed before the camera, and mounted on a stand which rotates with it. Cut-outs from photographs and picture post cards are placed in an aperture in the middle of the chamber, and when shot, these two-dimensional settings blend quite successfully with the players and objects on the set. Models also can be placed in the aperture. The lighting is naturally rather flat, but the device undoubtedly offers interesting new possibilities for inexpensive trick work.

At the six sessions of the Congress, films from France, Great Britain, Canada, America, Italy, the U.S.S.R. and Switzerland were shown. The first films to be presented were two medical subjects by the late Dr. de Martel who committed suicide in the summer of 1940 rather than live to see the Germans in control. *Trépanation pour*

tumeur de la région hypophysaire (Trepanning for a tumour of pituitary region) and *Trépanation pour crise d'épileptic bravais-jacksonnienne* (Trepanning for Jacksonian epileptic crisis) were straightforward records in Kodachrome made by this distinguished surgeon, who at some points in the film operates with his left hand to enable the cameraman to secure a better angle. These films proved too strong for some of the audience, and one or two weaker members were carried out and had to be restored with suitable "administrations" of cognac. Medical films made up a large part of the programmes. They included Lutenbacher's (Versailles) *Troubles de conduction transmyocardique* (Affections of the conducting mechanism of the heart), a teaching film combining animated graphs and experimental work on a sheep's heart; surgical films from the U.S.A. (Colonel Harbaugh's *Bilateral Leg Amputations* and H. N. Harkins' *Surgery of Varicose Veins*); and the Soviet *Throat Wounds and their Treatment* by Trutnev, Zemtrov and Fédorov. Two anæsthesia films were presented, both Canadian, K. M. Heard's *Spinal Anesthesia with nupercaine*, a film with a marked advertising angle, and M. D. Leigh's *Pediatric Anesthesia* in colour. Nothing comparable for teaching value with the British *Technique of Anæsthesia Series* was shown at the Congress. Our own *Surgery in Chest Disease* was a considerable success and French surgeons were struck by the disciplined teamwork shown. Only two films dealing with the social aspects of medical work were given; *Sergeant's Diary*, a well-made but rather sentimental American film for building up the morale of soldiers who had undergone amputations, and Rotha's *Blood Transfusion*. This latter was greatly admired and Lo Duca, the film critic of "Cité-Soir", advised French shorts producers to meditate on the effective restraint of its commentary.

A record of the total eclipse of the sun on July 9th, 1945, made in Sweden by Leclerc and other French scientists, combined a pleasant account of the communal life of the astronomers of the two nations on the site, with speeded-up cinematography of the phenonomen itself. Amongst the biological films shown, Goodliffe's *Scabies Mite* was considered outstanding and *Life Cycle of Pin Mould* and *Life Cycle of Maize* were greeted as further examples of British photomicrography and styles of exposition. Guy-Busnel of Paris contributed an excellent film on the Colorado beetle, and the Italian film, *Flower Morphology*, by Professor Carano contained some good time-lapse sequences. But for me, the most fascinating of all these films were two studies of micro-organisms by the famous Doctor Comandon of the Pasteur Institute at Garches. Comandon, who has been using the cinema as a weapon of research since 1905, was unfortunately ill and his work was presented by a colleague, de Fonbrune. *La caryocinèse d'une cellule* (Karyokinesis) and *Etudes sur l'amibe et greffes de noyau d'amibe* (Studies on the grafting of an amoeba nucleus) showed with some exceptionally lovely photomicropgraphy experiments in cell division and illustrated the very fine instruments for handling micro-organisms in use at the Pasteur Institute. My own feelings about these brilliant examples of what film can do were summed up at the final session by the present Director-General of the French Cinema industry, M. Fourré-Cormeray, when he said, "Maybe in the end, the scientific film, made in a spirit of complete objectivity, comes near to the supreme manifestations of art itself".

We may feel a certain pride that it was left to British non-theatrical films to bring the importance of the social applications of science to the notice of the Congress. To illustrate a speech I made about the work being done over here with specialised agricultural and medical films, I showed *Potato Blight* and later answered questions on the work of the M.O.I. Films Division. What Denis Marion in the newspaper "Combat" called charmingly "la non-theatrical plan", was clearly a new use of the film for many of them. But it was left to *World of Plenty* to complete the impression of what one report called "British mastery" in this field. The presentation of a documentary which carries so strong a verbal as well as visual punch was something of a problem with such an audience. To meet this, I had the temerity to translate the commentary as the film was projected with the volume control suitably lowered. *World of Plenty* survived this hard treatment and its unexpected technique and the direct and human quality of its approach made a deep impression.

During my stay, I attended and spoke at a meeting of the Union Universitaire Française, a teachers' organisation largely created during the Resistance. The subject discussed was our new Education Act, and the interest displayed in it was characteristic of the vast and friendly curiosity among the French about educational and social developments over here. Documentary and scientific films can, and should play a major rôle in satisfying this curiosity. There should be traffic, too, in the other direction. Many of the French scientific films shown would be of great interest to Scientific Film Societies and research workers in this country. The time has come indeed when some international mechanism of distribution and liaison should be established in this field.

Cry from the Colonies

From a correspondent:—

Have you had a look at what Britain likes to call *British News?* Terrible! Badly edited and scamped through in general with a hundred foot sequence consisting of King, Windsor Castle, the Thames, English landscapes in general and a Union Jack leading into the title which is so slow that it aptly prepares one for the dreary slow nonsense that usually follows. You should sense the feeling of audiences out here when this atrocity appears. I understand that it is prepared and sent out by the British Council. Compared to the ordinary British newsreels and the American newsreels which are usually only a week behind the times instead of our three or four months, the *British News* derides and besmirches the flag.

Film News

Film News has appeared with a new format. It is still published by American Film Centre, but is now edited by Thomas Baird. It can be obtained from Film Centre. The subscription is ten shillings a year.

THE Screenwriters' Association is about to resume publication of its bulletins listing screen credits. In future the bulletin will appear every six months but the coming issue will contain details of all types of films issued between January 1st, 1943, and September 30th, 1945. All directors, writers and others are invited to submit particulars of their credits to Gordon Wellesly, 107 Latymer Court, W.6.

FILM REVIEWS

Star in the Sand. Merlin for M.O.I. With UNRRA, the Yugo-Slav Camp Committee and the Yugo-Slav Central Choir conducted by Joseph Hatze. *Story*: Arthur Calder Marshall. *Direction*: Gilbert Gunn. *Photography*: Cyril Bristow. *Editing*: Robert Kemplan and Patricia Murray. *Musical Score*: Ivor Walsworth. C.F.L. 20 mins.

Subject and Content: An UNRRA Camp Settlement in Egypt for Yugo-Slav refugees. A beautiful and at times deeply moving film has been made from what was admittedly superb story material. In January, 1944, 30,000 Yugo-Slavs, the young, the aged and the infirm, made the long journey from the Dalmatian Coast across the Mediterranean to the Sinai Desert. There, in a country of hot calm days and sudden blinding sand-storms, they were established in a group of UNRRA Camps. All arrangements were planned in a spirit of mutual respect and co-operation between UNRRA officials and Yugo-Slav Committee. Once the bulk supplies had been provided on behalf of UNRRA by the British Army, the task of creating a new community fell entirely on the Yugo-Slavs themselves. What followed was a magnificent tale of effort and achievement in the spirit of their slogans: "In work is salvation—in freedom, education". British veterans of Alamein taught them desert cooking and in the infertile desert they made little islands of green vegetation from soil improvised with wet tea-leaves and cinders. Their only materials for constructing amenities were the scraps and litter of the battle-fields, but their craftsmanship and ingenuity won through. Within a week schools were opened, using teachers' memories as texts and the desert sand as exercise books. Within a year an elaborate system embodying primary to higher education had been evolved; a medical service with special clinics for eye, ear and other ailments and a central hospital with a maternity ward had been created; from a duplicated sheet a daily paper had grown; wall newspapers carried stories, poems, drawings and facts from home; the practice of the arts of music, painting and folk dancing enlivened their exile.

The lyricism of music and camera gives this film a feeling of exceptional vitality. Ivor Walsworth's score and the sound track generally maintain a high quality. It is the best story yet to reach us of democratic rehabilitation. The commentary is sympathetic and finely spoken.

The Story of D.D.T. Directorate of Army Kinematography. C.F.L. 23 mins.

Subject and Content: The discovery, testing, large-scale production and the war-time uses of D.D.T. The film opens with an effectively brief parade, with some photomicrography, of the chief disease-bearing insects. The German, Seiler, is seen discovering dichlor-diphenyl-trichlor-ethane, unaware of its importance at a time when the role of insects as agents in the spread of epidemics was not understood. Research since then has produced many insecticides to help prevent epidemics and given us drugs as curatives. A uniformed M.O. explains how Japanese conquests deprived us of many sources of these preventatives and cures, but this was more than offset in one direction by the timely applications of Seiler's seventy-year old discovery. The patient and carefully controlled researches carried out in British laboratories and under field conditions are related by a suitably diffident academic voice. The second part of the film deals with the mass production of D.D.T. in various forms and its use in Naples, in the liberation of Western Europe and in South-East Asia.

The detail of experiment and trial—the gradual paralysis of the nervous system of the vectors (carriers), the R.A.M.C. men cheerfully eating, sleeping, living in the same impregnated shirts for a whole month, the aeroplanes spraying the D.D.T. and oil solution on English field and tropical bush with the same extraordinarily effective results—is all of it well done. The commentary is clear and unpretentious, but either through over-simplification or from false modesty, strangely underestimates the part played by the British in the control of the Naples typhus outbreak.

Audience Value: Excellent for the citizen-scientist. Within its limits, no film has conveyed in better or more simple terms the day-to-day aspects of modern research.

Your Children's Ears. Realist Film Unit for M.O.I. *Production*: John Taylor. *Direction*: Bert Pearl. C.F.L. 15 mins.

Content. The care of children's ears. A film for parents. The introduction arouses the interest by showing the difficulties involved in teaching deaf children—toddlers—to make sounds which are the beginnings of speech. The physiology of the ear is demonstrated by a well-conceived diagrammatic method; this is not pictorial, but a pleasing effect of roundness is provided by half-tone shading of the various parts as they are mentioned. The method of working is shown very effectively by the group of sound waves approaching the ear, and each succeeding group takes the hearing process one stage further into the ear until finally the message flashes to the brain. The third part of the film deals with the ear troubles which are avoidable or capable of being minimised by proper care, quite rightly omitting mention of irreparable damage to the inner ear.

Treatment: The film appears a little long, but the subject is developed by easy stages so as to make obvious the need for the proper treatment described both for general bodily health and for specific ear troubles.

Audience Value: The early part by itself would make an instructional film for children. Good use was made of "Teacher's licence" in that the first few groups of sound waves did not convey the message through to the brain, but stopped short for purposes of exposition. For children this licence would have to be explained by the teacher. In the latter part the wrong and right methods of ear treatment were dramatically treated and an appropriate recapitulation of these concluded the film.

Your Children's Teeth. Realist Film Unit for the M.O.I. *Production*: John Taylor. *Direction*: Jane Massey. C.F.L. 15 mins.

Content: The care of children's teeth. A film for parents. The care of a child's teeth begins with care for the general and dental health of the expectant mother, for, like the troubles of Tristam Shandy, those of the child's teeth begin before he is born. At successive stages the growth of the teeth is shown, with half-tone cut-away diagrams to explain their development, and suitable diet is mentioned. The structure of the tooth and the process of decay are made very clear in diagram, and shots of good and bad teeth emphasises the value of care. Methods of prevention of decay include cleaning the teeth of starchy foods by eating, for example, an apple, by using a tooth brush and by regular dental inspection. The film concludes with a valuable recapitulation of important points.

Audience Value: The film is suited only to its intended audience of parents and possible teachers; a different treatment would be required for a school teaching film, although many of the same shots could be used.

Unity is Strength. World-Wide for A.E.U. *Direction*: Ralph Bond. 33 mins.

Subject: The history and war effort of the Amalgamated Engineering Union.

Treatment: A straightforward, part commentary, part dialogue film made to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the amalgamation of the various engineering unions. Made from a good script, it is well directed and photographed. It is as good a film of its kind as you will see and undoubtedly it will be very useful. But it does raise the old question again of why Labour organisations are so backward in their planning of films. Why should the Unions stick to conventional, even threadbare, themes and leave it to commercial sponsors to make all the films such as *The Harvest Shall Come* and *Words and Actions*?

It is time the Unions and the Co-ops. and the Labour Party stopped making self-congratulatory films and started proper planned programmes of films for definite purposes. We suppose that we should congratulate the A.E.U., anyway, for being the first Union to make a film. But we hope that in future they will make full use of the opportunities that are open to them and that their example will be followed by the rest of the Labour movement.

Audience Value: Very good, especially for non-theatrical.

The Burning Question. World Wide for M.O.I. and Ministry of Fuel and Power. With Gillie Potter. *Production*: Ralph Bond. *Direction*: Ken Hughes. *Photography*: Geoff. Williams. C.F.L. 11 mins.

This film carries a series of hints on the domestic aspects of fuel economy and shows how light, heating and power derive in the end from coal. It does this job well. But it also sets out to be a comic film, in which task it is hampered by the presence of a comedian who is essentially "A Voice". Mr. Gillie Potter is a considerable artist in radio. He is the Don who has strayed into the music hall. His humour is entirely verbal and evocative. On this occasion, his journey from Hogsmorton to the recording studios was not, one feels, really necessary.

Vredens Dag (The Day of Wrath). Palladium Films, 1943. *Script*: Mogens Skot-Hansen, Poul Knudsen and Carl Dreyer. *Direction*: Carl Dreyer. *Photography*: Carl Andersson. *Music*: Poul Schierbeck. *Principal Players*: Thorkild Roose, Lisbeth Movin, Sigrid Neijendam, Preben Lerdorff, Albert Hoeberg, O. Ussing, Anna Svierkier.

Those who saw Carl Dreyer's *Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) usually place it with such classics of the silent screen as *Potemkin* and *Caligari*. His eight preceding films seem to have missed attention in Britain. Perhaps only one of them, *Du skal ære din Hustru* (*Thou Shalt Cherish Thy Wife*, 1925), reached here. It was released under the title of *The Master of the House*, and cropped up in a few cinemas in back streets. Anyone who saw it must have been struck by its sensitive handling of character, for Dreyer has always turned his brilliant powers of direction to the study of personal relationships.

After *Jeanne d'Arc* Dreyer made only one more film—his first talkie—before the outbreak of war. This was *Vampyr* (1933), recently shown by the London Film Institute Society in London. Most people find it the least successful of his films. After making it, he became a journalist until, to the great gain of cinema, he returned to direction in 1943. In that year, with the Germans occupying his country, he produced *Vredens Dag* for the Palladium Film Company. It was a box-office failure but, in my estimation, just as *Jeanne d'Arc* is now ranked as one of the masterpieces of the silent film, *Vredens Dag* will presently be hailed as one of the great sound film masterpieces.

Dreyer has taken for his theme the persecution of witches in the seventeenth century. One would have thought the affinity between the persecution of the witches and the persecution of the Jews would have stood out a mile, but the Germans did not notice anything. Like all Dreyer's work the film deals with complex and subtle relationships, this time between a saintly bishop, his mother, his young second wife and his son by his first wife. His second wife is also the daughter of someone supposed to have been a witch, and neither she nor the audience knows whether she has inherited the powers of her mother. Is it coincidence or witchcraft that her wishes come true? In a moment of despair she wishes her husband dead, for she has fallen in love with his son by his first wife. He is struck down on his way home from visiting a sick man. Is she responsible? She does not know. She is asked to declare that her husband has died a natural death. She cannot answer "Yes", and we are left supposing that she will meet the awful end of a witch whom she has seen persecuted and burnt alive—a brilliant and terrifying episode at the beginning of the film.

A bare account of the plot cannot possibly convey the subtlety of Dreyer's direction or the superlative qualities of the photography. Rarely will one see finer direction or finer playing than in the part of the tortured witch (Anna Svierkier); the bishop's young wife is played most subtly and seriously by Lisbeth Movin, who is otherwise well known in musical comedy. Every camera angle is perfectly adjusted both to character and mood. Camera movement, the dramatic use of white, and the masterly handling of the sound track prove Dreyer to be one of the greatest film directors alive to-day. In him, Denmark has a great contributor to European culture.

TWO INDIAN FILMS

Quite by chance these two films from India were projected together at a private view, and they show that two very definite trends are developing in Indian short film production. *Tree of Wealth* was made by the Government Film Unit, and *In Rural Maharashtra* by a commercial company (Prabhat Films) for the Government. The former was well made, nicely photographed and very thorough. *In Rural Maharashtra* was flung together, very uneven to look at and as haphazard as a film could be, And yet, of the two, there is no doubt that the latter is the more important from the point of view of the future of Indian short films. *The Tree of Wealth*, glossy and presentable as it undoubtedly is, represents a very dangerous trend in film making which is not peculiar to India alone. (It must be emphasised that both films were made by Indian film units and that the same European spoke both commentaries which, incidentally, sounded as though they had been written by the same person).

The Tree of Wealth tells about the coconut palm and the different things which it produces. It was shot on very lovely locations in Travancore and shows us the villagers at work collecting the nuts, extracting the oil, preparing the fibre for mats, plaiting the leaves for roofs and, in general, making use of the many products of this useful and good-looking tree. All this the film does very well; everything that is going on is interesting and is pleasantly shot, and the commentator gives just the amount of information we need to make us feel we are understanding the subject. And yet this film, made by Indians, in India, might just as well have been made by a Fitzpatrick, so detached is the handling of the subject.

Detachment, of course, has its place among all the many possible methods of approach to a film subject, but if it is going to be used, it should not be mixed with sentimentality. Goodness knows, there have been enough films made in Britain which have set out to prove that this or that industry is both quaint and important, without us wishing to see another country falling into the same error.

Now let us look at the second film, *In Rural Maharashtra*. This must. to the makers of the film, have seemed a very similar subject—village life in a part of India. The film is technically inferior to the other, but the people who made it were obviously enthusiastic and excited by the subject and what they found to film. So, of course, the result is entirely different; the film is exciting to look at and enlarges our knowledge of India. Enthusiasm carries us across the parts of the film which are superficial and through the dull patches of photography, and even makes unimportant some of the most disastrous trick wipes in the history of film making. Because we want to know what the next shot is going to be we forgive the many faults of film construction, and that is in itself one test of good film making. (The intensity of purpose has even affected the commentator, who, although still using such adjectives as "fascinating", does enter into the spirit of the film).

Integrity of purpose is perhaps the prime necessity of short film making. *The Tree of Wealth* has not got it and *In Rural Maharashtra* has. The latter is likely to be more difficult for an audience to accept but it will make an impression; the former will be enjoyed by everybody and remembered by none. The makers of both films would profit by seeing a film called *Eskimo Arts and Crafts* from the Canadian National Film Board. This film shows people doing things which are far more extraordinary to us than anything shown in the two Indian films and yet presents them so sensibly that we are not at all surprised and accept them as extremely reasonable things to do. It is to be hoped that films on similar subjects to the ones which the Information Board of India is tackling can be shown to the Indian technicians, not so that they shall imitate the method of their making, but so that they can study the manner of the approach.

These two films also demonstrate very clearly aspects of a problem which is obviously bothering Indian film makers very much, and it is one which will also be causing a lot of trouble to other countries when they start making their own short films. Roughly the problem is this. Suppose that you have a film industry which is not yet up to world-market standards, and that, on top of this, your films are made in a language which is not understood in countries other than your own. Suppose, further, you want to spread knowledge of your country abroad by means of short films and can get quite a considerable showing for them. Should you then import foreign technicians to make films which have the currently accepted technical gloss? Should you set your own technicians to work to imitate the films of other countries? Or should you take a long term view and hack out your own path? And in all the cases mentioned, what do you do about the commentary? To have it written and spoken by your own countrymen will preserve a flavour of the land in which the film is made but may be irritating for the foreign audiences for which it has been designed. To have the film presented by a European writer and speaker will mean it is almost bound to take a too detached view of the subject.

This is what the Informations Films of India unit is up against and, on the whole, it is tending to follow the course which results in a polished film bearing happy comparison with, say, an American short, but which does not quite succeed in developing fully the film medium as a means of natural expression. Until the problem of India's future is satisfactorily settled, it is true to say that they will not be able to make really good Indian films. The ones which they are sending out of India at the moment have an extra importance because of the present difficult political situation and it is worth while considering them seriously. Let us hope that while Information Films of India are making their present programme they are also training a large number of young technicians who will, when the time comes, be ready to form the nucleus of a truly National Film Board.

NEWS FROM EGYPT

From a Special Correspondent

OVER NINETY per cent of the population of Egypt exists on starvation wages, whilst there are possibly more millionaires in the country than in any other part of the world. The country is run theoretically on modern democratic lines, yet one only has to wander a short distance off the beaten track to find a social system that is feudal. What is more important in the present context, however, is the fact that the splendour and beauty of Islamic culture has been allowed to die and has been replaced by a bastardised version of Western civilisation, adopted at second-hand and which the Egyptian does not really understand. It is on a conspicuous lack of a culture of its own, and on a most hazy appreciation of Western culture that the film industry in Egypt has been built.

Egypt is still the only country in the Middle East which has its own film industry. Before 1925 all films shown in the Middle East were imported, but in that year the first local production was made by a group controlled by an enterprising woman called Aziza Amir. This early attempt was crude to a degree. Made by amateurs and without studio facilities, the film was nevertheless exceedingly popular on account of its handling of a local subject in a local setting. It was, however, a flash in the pan—the better quality of foreign films was obvious, and foreign agencies had the virtual monopoly of the circuits, which at that time were very small.

With the advent of the talkie the chances of success were greater, owing to the value of dialogue in the vernacular, and Talaat Harb Pasha, the managing director of the Banque Misr, who was at that time sponsoring many new enterprises in Egypt, became interested in the possibilities of building a studio on European lines, and attempting to establish a local film industry. In 1932–3 the Studios Misr were built, and German experts and technicians (with a few Italians) were imported to make films with Egyptian actors and Arabic dialogue. At the same time young and enthusiastic Egyptians were taken on as apprentices to study the ways of film-making. To begin with the venture met with little success, but gradually it established itself and, with the growth of the circuits, the popularity of home-made Arabic films increased. Technique improved too, and a few years before the war the foreign technicians drifted away (largely because of small pay) and their Egyptian pupils stepped in.

The industry has never been anything else but one hundred per cent commercial and, since the war, from the commercial point of view, it has never looked back. In a country that has as yet no modern local culture there are no modern standards of criticism. With technical improvements, with the insistence of foreign films on subjects dear to the heart of the war-time propagandists, but which are of little interest to a simple and disinterested audience, and with the spread of the circuits to almost every inhabited locality of respectable size in the Middle East, not to mention North Africa and parts of India, there is not one film made in Egypt since the war which has not brought in enormous profits. The audiences which provide the greater part of this income are not interested in ethical problems or social questions. They want merely enough crude sentiment and humour to appeal to their basic emotions, set in backgrounds familiar to them, with the guarantee of a song and a dance thrown in somewhere and somehow.

Films are made in the shortest possible time, in a way so casual that it would horrify anyone from a western studio. There are practically no closed doors or red silence lights; coffee and cigarettes are dispensed freely and frequently to any friends who may drop in for a gossip and to watch the progress of shooting. Taking these things into consideration, and remembering that there are hardly any re-takes owing to shortage of stock, the results are often surprisingly good. Further, it can now be said that there is growing up a small body of young intelligent directors who, although technically lacking in competence, are genuinely trying to find out what they can do and to build up an industry as definitely peculiar to Egypt as the French film is to France. They are aware that, in balance, rhythm and composition, they are as yet extremely unpractised, but they are eager for help and advice. With the lack of natural intellectual and aesthetic background improvement will, however, inevitably be a slow business. They are also handicapped by the fact that their efforts, with a few exceptions, remain unappreciated by discerning people within the major cities of Cairo and Alexandria. It is an indication of progress, however, that the director, who only two years ago was regarded by the producers as a technician and not as a creator, and who was paid an insignificant sum accordingly, today can command a considerable amount of money for making a picture.

From the point of view of the documentary film in Egypt, practically nothing has been done. The number of documentaries made in the country can be counted on the fingers of one hand, and they were made with no knowledge of the approach and methods required. The general public is not interested and regards short films of any nature, with the exception of colour cartoons, as just a waste of time. And yet there is great scope for documentary in the country. Since the war the Egyptian government has been genuinely impressed with the value of documentary and also instructional films. There have been articles in the Arab press urging the Government to start making such films for foreign showing, stressing the fact that the world is almost totally ignorant of modern Egypt and that this is a state of mind which should be remedied. Furthermore, considerable interest in Egypt is being shown today by North Africa and India. Both English-speaking documentaries for European and American consumption and Arabic-speaking ones for Middle Eastern consumption badly need developing. Unfortunately there appears to be no one in Egypt with the ability to start such a scheme.

British documentaries are being shown in the Middle East in increasing numbers and have done as much as anything to foster this interest, though they are rarely seen in the public cinemas. Such films are shown through the agencies of the British Council and to a lesser extent through the M.O.I. British Council films are shown all over the Middle East, often to highly specialised audiences. In general, they do not reach a wide enough section of the public, being seen mainly by those who attend the British Institutes established throughout the Middle East by the British Council and in certain clubs in the cities. Similarly British features hardly ever get so good a booking in the public theatres as do Hollywood productions and it is fairly exceptional to find a British feature running more than one week in Cairo. There seems to have been no attempt to get British documentaries shown regularly in the theatres at all.

SALESMANSHIP?

Films from Britain is issued by British Information Services in New York. It is a catalogue containing an impressive list of films which are available to the people of America on sub-standard. Unfortunately, although the films listed are a good selection, the catalogue itself is badly presented. The cover design is dull and would have been more suitable for a haulage contractor's pamphlet, the paper on which the catalogue is printed is of poor quality and the lay-out of the wording is irritating and makes the catalogue unattractive to read. Finally we would suggest that to put conditions of sale and loan before the list of films is not the best way in which to lure people on to read a catalogue. Surely H.M.G. can do better than this, especially in a country where the art of presenting such information has reached such a very high level. Of course there is a possibility that the catalogue was presented in such a shoddy way deliberately as an example of austere and rugged individualism.

FILM SOCIETIES

The London Scientific Film Society has had great difficulty in finding suitable premises. The first performance will be given on Sunday, December 9th, at 2.45 at the Scala Theatre, Charlotte Street, W.1.

The Cape Town Film Society (Secretary: Mrs. G. K. Agnew, P.O. Box 3218, Cape Town) held its first performance on Wednesday, August 29th. The programme consisted of *Teeth of Steel*, *Behind the Screen* (Chaplin), *Night Mail* and *Prelude to War*. By the time the second performance was held towards the end of September, the Society was already turning members away because all available seating accommodation was booked. The objects of the Society are to further interest in the film as a social, artistic and historical medium, to further film appreciation, and to undertake any other related activities.

The Dundee Film Society (Secretary: G. A Kinnear, 3 King's Road, Dundee) opened its eleventh season on Sunday, October 14th. The programme consisted of *Song of Ceylon* and *Le Bonheur*.

The Northern Counties Children's Cinema Council opened its seventh series of "Films for Educationists" at the News Theatre, Pilgrim Street, Newcastle-upon-Tyne on Saturday, October 13th. The programme was drawn mainly from the Central Film Library. Five further programmes in this series are planned. Another series, known as "Films for the Classroom", was launched on Friday, October 5th, with a programme of geography films. The secretary is Mr. F. R. Griffin, 138 Holystone Crescent, Newcastle upon Tyne 7.

The Workers' Film Association ran a Film School at Cliftonville at the end of September. Speakers included Sidney Bernstein, Basil Dearden, Arthur Elton, Ernest Meyer, Geoffrey Bell, Mary Field, and Frank Sainsbury.

The Leicester City Libraries have arranged a "Programme of Film-Lectures" in the Southfields Library. Seven sessions are planned on "The Face of Britain", "Pacific War", "Other People's Jobs", "Spotlight on Education", "G.P.O.", "Canadian North" and "Building and Planning". Each programme will be accompanied by a speaker, and an excellent reading list has been issued.

The Leigh, Atherton and Tyldesley Districts Film Society (Secretary: J. C. Fletcher, Hindles Cottage, Atherton) had its first performance on October 3rd. The principal film was *Spring Song*, "a Russian musical film free from all politics, history and propaganda". Other programmes will include *The Italian Straw Hat*, *The Blue Angel*, *Of Mice and Men* and *The Ghost Goes West*. On November 14th there will be a session billed as "The Amateurs' Contribution to Screen Art". Mr. G. H. Higginson will screen a programme of his own films. This seems a move other film societies might well follow.

The Scientific Film Association has started to issue a *Scientific Film Societies' News Letter* to its 20 member societies. It contains notes of new films and similar information. much of it of interest to all societies, since so many of the films listed are suitable for popular use.

The joint film catalogue activities of **The Scientific Film Association** and **The Royal Society of Medicine** have brought to light a good copy of Pukovkin's *The Mechanism of the Brain*, a study of Pavlov's theories. The film was produced in 1925 and shown at the R.S.M. and the Film Society. The copy then disappeared, and has only just been found in a miscellaneous collection of films forwarded for examination by the Physiological Institute of University College. The print has been handed to the National Film Library.

Copenhagen Filmkreseu (Film Circle) had its first performance on Sunday, November 28th. Arthur Elton gave an address, and the programme consisted of *These Are the Men*, *Listen to Britain* and *World of Plenty*. Five more programmes are planned.

The New London Film Society which takes the place of the now defunct "London Film Institute Film Society", opens a "Festival of Great Films, 1895-1945" with a performance of the original version of *Birth of a Nation* (1915) at the Scala Theatre on Sunday, December 2nd, at 3 p.m. There will be twelve programmes in all, and many of the films will be drawn from the collection in *The Museum of Modern Art*, New York. The council consists of Rodney Acland, Anthony Asquith, Michael Balcon, Cavalcanti, Dilys Powell and Olwen Vaughan. Applications for membership should be made to Miss Olwen Vaughan, 4 St. James's Place, S.W.1.

BOOK REVIEW

Film and the Future, by Andrew Buchanan. (Allen & Unwin. 6*s*.)

Mr. Buchanan seeks to find out whether the film exerts the right or wrong kind of influence for the world today. Most people will join him in his quest with sympathy and interest, but they will also find his forced witticisms and personal references rather trying. The good intentions are there, and the desire to make good national films which are of real international value. But we could have done with less forced brightness. Finally, one quotation might give some idea of Mr. Buchanan's approach: "If the screen is our canvas, religion is the only power which can inspire us to paint upon it the type of films mankind is needing. Humanity is not asking for such films, because as a result of materialistic propaganda much of the world has become inarticulate, immunised against truth".

CORRESPONDENCE

A.SC.W. GRADED LIST

DEAR SIR,

When at last the long-heralded and eagerly anticipated flood of substandard film apparatus and supplies of educational films actually arrives, it will be essential that one or more disinterested bodies undertake an efficient catalogue of the films available. Up till now The British Film Institute has, from time to time, published a fairly comprehensive catalogue of scientific films; but the B.F.I. is not the most obviously suitable body to undertake this work, and in any case their catalogues do not attempt any assessment of merit, which is really a necessity for the ordinary catalogue user.

Now, the Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers have published a "Graded List of Scientific Films" which claims to be "a comprehensive record of the best of such films". At first sight the A.Sc.W. would seem to be the ideal body to undertake this work and their system of grading seems very sensible —three classifications: General, Specialist and Teaching, and three grades: recommended, suitable, and not recommended.

But when the catalogue is examined in detail it is found to contain a host of inaccuracies—wrong titles, mis-spellings, inaccurate cross-references, etc. Moreover, there doesn't seem much point in listing films which are described as "withdrawn" or "not available", particularly when the same film may be described under one subject-heading as available and under another as withdrawn (e.g., *Five Faces*, available under "Anthropology", withdrawn under "Sociology".) As regards the gradings awarded in the catalogue, such things are, of course, very much a matter of personal opinion, but many of them do certainly appear on the face of it most extraordinary. For example, under "Sociology", *The City*, *The Face of Britain* and *A Child went Forth* are all graded higher than *Land without Bread* and *Housing Problems*, while *The Nose has it* is considered better "Light Relief" than *How to Sleep*.

What is more serious, however, is the whole host of films which find no mention in the catalogue at all. We must assume that they have been relegated to Grade 3, "not recommended for any audience type". To take one single heading only, "Agriculture and Horticulture", it would be interesting to hear the Committee's reasons for excluding from a list, which includes such films as *Pests of* 1938 (withdrawn) and *Cheese for Choice* (withdrawn), the following films from one source only:—

Kill that Rat
The Rabbit Pest
Ditching
Hedging
Food from Straw
A Way to Plough
Clamping Potatoes
Growing Good Potatoes
Clean Milk
Fuel and the Tractor
Welding Helps the Farmer
Cereal Seed Disinfection
Vegetable Seed Growing
Stooking and Stacking
Making Good Hay
Re-seeding for Better Grass
Potato Blight
Grass and Clover Seed Production
Flax
Storing Vegetables Indoors
Storing Vegetables Outdoors
More Eggs from Your Hens
Keeping Rabbits for Extra Meat
Feeding Your Hens in Wartime
Garden Tools
Saving Your Own Seeds
Winter Work in the Garden
Simple Fruit Pruning
New Crop
Modern Pruning for Commercial Apple Orchards

All these films had been completed well before May, 1945, which is the date of this catalogue.

If the Committee considers none of these films suitable for inclusion, they are unfitted to do their work, and a list which omits such films is obviously not worth publication.

Yours faithfully,

BRIAN SMITH

(*Continued at foot of col.* 2)

CATALOGUE OF M.O.I. FILMS MADE IN 1944

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ABBREVIATIONS

15-M: Fifteen minute film release
T: Mainly Theatrical Release
NT: Mainly Non-Theatrical Release
I: Instructional
CFL: Listed in Central Film Library Catalogue
W: Withdrawn
OO Mainly for Overseas use
OOO Wholly for Overseas use

Names of people in brackets do not appear on credit titles.

1. THEATRICAL AND NON-THEATRICAL RELEASES

TITLE	DISTRIBUTION		PRODUCTION UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATES T	RELEASE DATES NT	LENGTH	NOTES
Atlantic Trawler	CFL	NT	Realist	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	—	10/44	1,960	
Back to Normal	CFL	15-M	Merlin	M. Hankinson	R. McDougall	10/44	1/45	1,358	
Bailey Bridge	CFL	OO	Merlin	M. Hankinson	A. Barnes	—	1/45	1,008	
By Sea and Land	CFL	15-M	Crown	J. Holmes	J. Lee	9/44	10/44	1,202	
Catholics in Britain		OOO	Verity	S. Box	H. Cass	—	—	1,415	Despatched Latin America 5/44
Checkmate!		OOO	Merton Park	F. A. Hoare	H. Purcell	—	—	1,663	Despatched Latin America 5/44
Children of the City	CFL	NT	P. Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	B. Cooper	—	6/44	2,853	
Chinese in Britain		OOO	Strand	D. Taylor	C. Heck	—	—	3,028	Despatched China, Autumn 1944. A version is being prepared for CFL
Chinese Mission to Britain		OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	953	Despatched China 7/44
Cine Sports Magazine No. 13								1,020	Despatched 1/44
No. 14								977	Despatched 2/44
No. 15								950	Despatched 3/44
No. 16		OOO	G.B.S.S.	—	—	—	—	970	Despatched 4/44
No. 17								940	Despatched 5/44
No. 18								945	Despatched 6/44
No. 19								873	Despatched 7/44
No. 20								888	Despatched 8/44
A City Reborn	CFL	NT	Gryphon	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	—	—	2,048	Release date not yet fixed
Conquest of a Dry Land	CFL	NT	Information Films of India	Ezra Mir	—	—	1/45	827	Adapted by Sylvia Cummins
Conquest of a Germ	CFL	15-M	Gryphon	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	6/44	9/44	1,348	
Cornish Valley	CFL	NT	Green Park	—	R. Keene	—	9/44	1,500	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Cotswold Club	CFL	NT	Strand	D. Taylor	C. de Latour	—	4/44	1,064	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Crofters	CFL	NT	Green Park	—	R. Keene	—	9/44	2,118	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Date with a Tank	CFL	15-M	Army F.U.	—	—	8/44	9/44	1,291	
Doing Without		OOO	Spectator	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	1/44	1,214	
Duke of Gloucester		OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	8/44	919	Newsreel Compilation
Eighty Days, The	CFL	NT	Crown	H. Jennings	—	—	1/45	1,266	
Farm is Reclaimed, A	CFL	I	Campbell Harper	—	A. Harper	—	1/45	1,331	
Flax	CFL	NT	Strand	D. Taylor	—	—	6/44	824	
Fuel for Battle	CFL	NT	Strand	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	—	9/44	1,893	
Grass & Clover Seed Production	CFL	I	Strand	—	—	—	3/44	1,349	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Grassy Shires, The	CFL	NT	Green Park	—	R. Keene	—	4/44	1,397	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Great Circle	CFL	15-M	Shell	E. Anstey	N. Bell	7/44	10/44	1,194	
Harbour Goes to France	CFL	15-M	Admir. & Army F.U.	—	—	11/44	1/45	1,242	
Housing in Scotland	CFL	NT	Merlin	—	G. Gunn	—	1/45	1,296	
How to Bake	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	645	
How to Boil	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	750	
How to Cook Green Vegetables	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	771	
How to Fry	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	669	
How to Make Short Pastry	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	9/44	876	
Hundred Years Old, A		OOO	G.B.I.	—	Brian Salt	—	9/44	996	
Jig-Saw 2		OO	Verity	—	H. Cass	—	6/44	779	
Latin Americans in England		OOO	Paramount	—	—	—	—	954	Despatched overseas 4/44
Life Saving at Sea	CFL	I	Films in G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	11/44	3,402	
(Lili Marlene)	*See* The True Story of Lili Marlene								
Minefield		15-M	Army F.U.	—	—	4/44	5/44	1,308	
Naples in a Battlefield	CFL	15-M	R.A.F. F.U. & Army F.U.	—	—	2/44	5/44	1,218	
New Builders	CFL	NT	P. Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	K. Mander	—	11/44	1,914	
New Crop, The	CFL	NT	Green Park	—	K. Annakin	—	4/44	1,721	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
New Zealand	CFL	NT	Crown	—	—	—	3/44	1,323	Compilation ("Know the Commonwealth" Series No. 2)
Night Flight	CFL	NT	R.A.F. F.U.	—	—	—	10/44	2,042	
One Man, Two Jobs	CFL	NT	Movietone	G. Sanger	—	—	4/44	969	
Our Country		T	Strand	A. Shaw	J. Eldridge	—	—	3,996	Release 6/45
Outworking	CFL		Strand	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	10/44	1,138	
Patching and Darning	CFL	I	Films of G.B.	—	A. Buchanan	—	2/44	970	
Potato Blight	CFL	I	Realist	—	R. Hunter	—	3/44	1,473	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
Rationing in Britain		OOO	World Wide	R. Bond	G. Cutts	—	—	973	Despatched overseas 6/44
Rescue Reconnaissance	CFL	I	Shell	E. Anstey	G. Tharp	—	6/44	3,090	
Ship Against Plane		OOO	Movietone	—	—	—	—	992	Compilation. Desp. Overseas 11/44
Some Like it Rough	CFL	NT	Pub. Relationship	G. Wallace	R. Massingham	—	—	1,225	Release not yet fixed
South Africa	CFL	15-M	Crown	—	—	—	5/44	1,240	Compilation ("Know the Commonwealth" Series No. 1)
Soviet Village	CFL	NT	P. Rotha Prods.	—	—	—	10/44	843	Compilation
Start in Life, A	CFL	NT	Realist	J. Taylor	B. Smith	—	9/44	1,995	English version of a film originally designed for Latin America
Steam Utilisation	CFL	I	C.W.S.	—	G. Wynn	—	10/44	1,894	
Subject Discussed	CFL	NT	Gryphon	D. Taylor	C. de Latour	—	1/45	1,325	
Three Cadets	CFL		Green Park	R. Keene	K. Annakin	—	1/45	1,968	
Transatlantic Airport	CFL	15-M	Crown	A. Elton	M. Gordon	12/44	—	1,293	
True Story of Lili Marlene, The		T	Crown	(J. Holmes)	H. Jennings	8/44	—	2,683	
Two Fathers		T	Crown	Elton	A. Asquith	—	—	1,205	Release not yet fixed
V.1		OOO	Crown	H. A. Jennings	—	—	—	758	Despatched to U.S. 11/44
War on Wheels	CFL	I	World Wide	R. Bond	K. Hughes	—	7/44	1,348	
West Indies Calling		15-M	P. Rotha Prods.	P. Rotha	D. Alexander	1/44	—	1,306	
Western Approaches		T	Crown	I. Dalrymple	P. Jackson	11/44	—	7,529	In technicolor
Willing Hands	CFL	NT	World Wide	J. Carr	M. Frances	—	10/44	958	
Worker & Warfront No. 10							2/44	1,083	
No. 11							4/44	975	
No. 12	CFL	NT	—	—	—	—	9/44	969	A magazine, assembled by Films of Fact, from items produced by various units
No. 13							11/44	1,020	
No. 14							1/45	851	

2. NEWSREEL TRAILERS

TITLE	PRODUCTION UNIT	DIRECTOR	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT	RELEASE DATE	NOTES
Coals of Fire	Concanen	D. de Marney	Min. of Fuel and Power	13th Jan.	
Agag	Publicity Pictures	—	Min. of War Transport	20th Jan.	
The Conjurer	Merton Park	A. C. Hammond	Min. of Fuel and Power	3rd Feb.	
Proceed According to Plan	Crown	G. Bryant	Min. of Agric. and Fisheries	17th Feb.	
Your Perishing Rubber	Crown	G. Bryant	Ministry of Supply	24th Feb.	
Kitchen Nuts	Crown	G. Bryant	Min. of Fuel and Power	9th March	
Pay as You Earn	Strand	R. McDougall	Treasury	16th March	
Write to the Forces	Army F.U.	—	War Office	23rd March	
Do Moths Make Good Mothers ?	Publicity Pictures	—	Board of Trade	30th March	
Tim Marches Back	Film Traders	Hoellering	G.P.O.	6th April	
Butterfly Bomb	Verity	D. Birt	Ministry of Home Security	17th April	Re-issue
Cold Comfort	Halas Batchelor	—	Ministry of Fuel and Power	20th April	Cartoon
Early April	Merton Park	R. Curtis	Min. of Agric. and Fisheries	27th April	
Domestic Workers	Merton Park	R. Curtis	Ministry of Labour	4th May	
Children's Vitamins	Merton Park	R. Curtis	Ministry of Food	8th May	
Compost Heaps	Halas Batchelor	—	Min. of Agric. and Fisheries	11th May	Cartoon. Re-issue
From Rags to Stitches	Halas Batchelor	—	Ministry of Supply	22nd May	Cartoon
It Makes You Think	Elwis	—	Fire Offices Committee	29th May	
A Tickets Dream	Elwis	—	Ministry of Supply	1st June	
Eat More Green Vegetables	—	—	Ministry of Food	4th June	Scotland only
Blitz on Bugs	Halas Batchelor	—	Ministry of Agric. and Fisheries	8th June	Cartoon
Careless Talk	Strand	G. Gunn	Security Services	6th July	
Fifteen Bob	P. Rotha Prods.	—	National Savings Committee	10th July	England and Wales
Grain Harvest	Campbell Harper	—	Scottish Office	10th July	Scotland only
Bristles and Brushes	Elwis	—	Ministry of Supply	13th July	
Tom Johnstone's Appeal	Merton Park	E. C. Musk	Scottish Office	27th July	Scotland only
Little Drops of Water	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Health	10th August	
Diphtheria V	Strand	R. Macdougall	Ministry of Health	17th August	
Bones, Bones, Bones	Elwis	—	Ministry of Supply	24th August	
Blood Transfusion	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Health	7th Sept.	
Here We Go Gathering Spuds	Spectator	A. H. Luff	Dept. of Agric. for Scotland	11th Sept.	Re-issue for Scotland only
Harvest Uplift	Verity	W. McQuitty	Ministry of Agriculture	14th Sept.	England and Wales only
John Bull's Workers	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Labour	21st Sept.	
Come on, Girls	Merton Park	W. McQuitty	War Office	25th Sept.	
Books for the Brave	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Supply	28th Sept.	
Clear the Roads	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Supply	5th Oct.	
Burning Results	Strand	G. Gunn	Fire Offices Committee	9th Oct.	
You Can't Keep an Old Blade Down	Strand	R. Macdougall	Ministry of Supply	12th Oct.	
One Pair of Nostrils	Giles	—	Ministry of Health	19th Oct.	Cartoon
Tyre Economy	Film Traders	G. Hoellering	Ministry of Supply	26th Oct.	
Old Lags	Film Traders	G. Hoellering	Ministry of Health and Ministry of Fuel and Power	2nd Nov.	Re-issue
Mrs. Sew and Sew	H. Batchelor	—	Board of Trade	6th Nov.	Cartoon
Diphtheria VI	Concanen	D. de Marney	Ministry of Health	9th Nov.	
That's the Stuff to Give 'Em!	Crown	M. Gordon	Ministry of Supply	11th Nov.	
How to Use Your Doctor	Strand	P. Price	Ministry of Health	23rd Nov.	Re-issue
Christmas Wishes	H. Batchelor	—	G.P.O.	7th Dec.	Cartoon
Thank You, Housewives	Crown,	M. Gordon	Ministry of Supply	21st Dec.	

3. COLONIAL FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS

TITLE	LENGTH 16 mm.	DATE OF DESPATCH OVERSEAS	REMARKS
The British Empire at War No. 13	354 ft.	14/1/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 14	366 ft.	19/1/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 15	433 ft.	19/1/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 16	326 ft.	24/1/44	16 mm. Silent
Africa's Fighting Men	1,320 ft.	4/2/44	35 mm. Sound
West African Editors	911 ft.	4/2/44	35 mm. Sound
West African Editors (two reels)	882 ft.	17/2/44	16 mm. Silent
A British Family in Peace and War (four reels)	1,751 ft.	21/2/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 17	366 ft.	23/2/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 18	292 ft.	27/2/44	16 mm. Silent
Sam the Cyclist	225 ft.	10/3/44	16 mm. Silent
Cossack Horsemen	284 ft.	10/3/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 19	389 ft.	14/3/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 20	384 ft.	22/3/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 21	340 ft.	26/4/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 22	350 ft.	26/4/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 23	401 ft.	26/4/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 24	347 ft.	12/5/44	16 mm. Silent
Progress in the Colonies (Kenya)	350 ft.	7/6/44	16 mm. Silent (Kodachrome)
The British Empire at War No. 25	331 ft.	19/6/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 26	340 ft.	28/8/44	16 mm. Silent
Springtime in an English Village	272 ft.	28/9/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 27	371 ft.	7/10/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 28	410 ft.	14/10/44	16 mm. Silent
West Indians Join the R.A.F.	874 ft.	10/10/44	35 mm. Sound
Germans in Norway	593 ft.	20/10/44	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 29	368 ft.	—	16 mm. Silent
The British Empire at War No. 30	440 ft.	—	16 mm. Silent
Margarine (three reels)	1,114 ft.	—	16 mm. Silent
West African Editors	373 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Your People in Britain	317 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Cossack Horsemen	284 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Land and Water	406 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Sam the Cyclist	239 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
Africa's Fighting Men	532 ft.	14/11/44	16 mm. Sound
The British Empire at War No. 30	509 ft.	15/12/44	16 mm. Silent

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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Vol. V. INDICES (1944-1945)

Volume V contains nine issues, of which the first four were published in 1944. Unfortunately the page numbers of the fourth and fifth issues overlap, those of the fourth running from 41 to 52 inclusive, and those of the fifth from 49 to 60 inclusive. In the indices below, the repeated page numbers 49 to 52 are indicated thus †

(1) ARTICLES AND BOOK REVIEWS

Reviews of books are indicated by an asterisk.

(2) NAMES OF PEOPLE

Signed articles and letters are indicated by an asterisk.

ARMY FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS, 1941-1945

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TITLE		DIRECTOR OR PRODUCER	EDITOR	DATE OF COMPLETION	MUSIC	LENGTH IN FEET	OTHER DATA
Northern Outpost	5-M	W. D'eyncourt, Gerald Keen	—	4/41	—	650	With C.F.U. collaboration
Lofoten Islands	5-M	—	—	6/41	—	700	With C.F.U. collaboration
A.T.S.	5-M	Hugh Stewart	R. Verrall	7/41	—	700	
Special Despatch	5-M	Hugh Stewart	R. Carrick	11/41	—	868	
The Army lays the Rails	5-M	W. D'eyncourt, Gerald Keen	R. Verrall	12/41	Hans May	798	
Tobruk		A. Bryce (Producer)	R. Verrall	3/42	Richard Addinsell	1,500	Compilation
The Right Man	5-M	A. Bryce	F. Clare	6/42	—	707	
Troopship	5-M	W. D'eyncourt, Hugh Stewart	A. Best	7/42	Richard Addinsell	680	
Street Fighting		Hugh Stewart, Gerald Keen	F. Clarke	7/42	—	1,204	N.T. Release
Dover Revisited	5-M	Harry Watt	R. Verrall	8/42	—	720	
Tank Battle		Gerald Keen	R. Carrick	10/42	—	1,501	N.T. Release
Via Persia	5-M	Roy Boulting (Producer)	F. Clarke	10/42	—	740	Compilation
Malta G.C.		John Monk (Producer)	A. Best	10/42	A. Bax	1,832	With CFU & RAFFU collaboration
They Serve Abroad	5-M	Roy Boulting	J. Durst	12/42	—	700	
Desert Victory		David Macdonald, Roy Boulting	A. Best, F. Clarke, etc.	3/43	W. Alwyn	5,462	Compilation
A.B.C.A.	15-M	Gerald Keen	F. Clarke	7/43	W. Alwyn	1,354	
Tunisian Victory		Hugh Stewart, Frank Capra, Roy Boulting	—	7/43	W. Alwyn, etc.	7,400	With US APS collaboration
Man Wounded		Donald Bull	R. Carrick	12/43	—	1,668	N.T. Release
Naples is a Battlefield	15-M	—	P. Bayliss and R. Verrall	2/44	—	1,283	With RAFFU collaboration
Minefield!	15-M	Roy Boulting (Producer)	J. Durst	3/44	—	1,312	
Eve of Battle		David Macdonald	Starling and R. Verrall	6/44	—	1,553	With US APS collaboration
A Date with a Tank	15-M	Donald Bull	R. Carrick	7/44	—	1,325	
R.E.M.E.		—	R. Verrall	8/44	—	680	Compilation
Left of the Line		David Macdonald	A. Best and J. Durst	10/44	Dr. Clifford	2,365	Compilation
Harbour Goes to France	15-M	David Macdonald	R. Lloyd and A. Best	11/44	C. Danton	1,237	With RNFU Collaboration
The True Glory		Carrol Reed and Garson Kanin	R. Verrall, etc.	8/45	W. Alwyn	7,500	With US and other F Units
Burmah		David Macdonald and Roy Boulting	A. Best	—	—	6,000	In preparation

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DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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VOL. 6 1946 Fifty-first Issue PUBLISHED BY FILM CENTRE, 34 SOHO SQUARE, LONDON W.1 ONE SHILLING

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

WE are now entering on a period during which the Government Information Services of all kinds, and not least the visual media, must be reconsidered, and their means and methods of operation re-shaped. This country has emerged from World War II with a system of information which was virtually non-existent in 1939 (although in the film field at least the foundations had already been firmly laid), and, despite the screams of the more old-fashioned sects of journalism (e.g. the *Daily Express*), there can be no questioning the continuance of the system. But there is now an opportunity to get rid of the more unsatisfactory aspects of information machinery, and to provide more up-to-date methods. The approaching dissolution of the Ministry of Information, and the emergence of a Central Information Office in its place, provide the opportunity; and there are signs of goodwill from all parties concerned in seeking and applying new methods.

In previous issues of *D.N.L.* the successes and faults of the M.O.I. system over the war period has been perhaps sufficiently analysed. What is important at this stage is that the main principles of future organisation be properly assessed and analysed. In this connection John Grierson's visit to Britain at the request of the Government (to which we refer in a note of the month) is by no means irrelevant. A paper by him in which basic needs are summarised is now circulating in Government circles. This document is not for publication, but it is not, we are sure, improper to indicate that it briskly summarises the root-causes of the difficulties which have beset the information services.

The basic problem is of course a problem of liaison—liaison, that is, between the necessary administration of national monies on the one hand, and the equally necessary creative work of the film-makers on the other. During the past years, and particularly during the past six months, the gulf between these two functions (which should be complementary) has been widening. It is a gulf which must be eliminated if good work is to be achieved with speed, efficiency and economy; it must indeed be eliminated if good work is to be achieved at all.

The reason for the gulf is basically that a *modus vivendi* has not been found between the civil servants and the creative workers or, to use a new Whitehall term, perhaps significant in itself, the "craftsmen". We are not among those who picture the scene as one of black versus white; of the saintlike artist in righteous rebellion against the reactionary civil servant. On the contrary, we believe that there are plenty of faults on both sides.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that the necessary liaison between the two functions can never be achieved unless and until the creative side works on equal terms with the administrative side on the highest levels of policy, planning and responsibility. Hitherto the film-makers (experts and creators) have not found themselves represented at policy level. Vital questions of policy, and of administration relating to policy, have been discussed and decided without their collaboration. The result, in terms of ideology, in terms of finance, and in terms of economy and efficiency, has been a dichotomy between the two elements. This in time has led to a feeling among the makers that the essential responsibilities of their job have been removed from them. It is only a short step from that feeling to a mood of irresponsibility.

During the next few months, when the new C.I.O. has to be moulded (for the Prime Minister's statement was couched in terms carefully vague), it is essential that the closest attention be paid to ensuring a close liaison between administrator and creator. In this sense liaison demands an understanding of departmental information needs, of film-making itself, and of the specific financial and administrative controls essential to any work carried out with national funds. Thus the officers carrying out the liaison functions must have a knowledge not only of creative problems and techniques but also of civil service requirements.

This means that the civil service on the one hand must willingly accept the creative role on a much higher level than tradition and dyed-in-the-wool concepts have hitherto permitted. On the other hand that the creative workers must be willing to shoulder the basic responsibilities of work in the public service to a degree which in the past has been if not impossible at any rate unattractive. It means, in fact, that the responsible figures inside the information set-up must, at a high level, command equal confidence from both creator and administrator; for which reason the word liaison is especially significant.

There is no doubt that if this basic principle is accepted and applied, many of the irksome difficulties and intricacies of detail (finance, departmental delays, confused briefing and equally confused scripting, lack of planning and provision, etc.) will be all the easier of solution.

The approaching demise of the M.O.I. has recently been sharply indicated by the resignation of Jack Beddington from the Directorship of the Films Division. Whatever the degree to which the documentary people may have from time to time crossed swords with Beddington during his six years at the M.O.I. there can be nothing other than unanimity in their recognition of the job he has done. Under conditions often of the utmost difficulty he has kept up a high level of production and distribution; he has commanded the

confidence of the film trade as a whole; and he has shown a special genius for permitting his staff to act on their own initiative, and, more importantly, has backed their actions.

It has been announced that his post is not to be filled during the interim period between now and the evolution of the new C.I.O. The gap he leaves poses, in fact, the problem, and we can perhaps pay him no greater compliment than in emphasising that fact.

Meantime Basil Wright has resigned from the post of producer in charge of the Crown Film Unit, which he had held since January, 1945. No reason for this move has been published, but it is thought that his resignation arose specifically from a desire to emphasise the liaison problem to which we have referred. However that may be, it is significant that he has now been appointed consultant to Films Division during the coming period. This in itself is a sign that the higher levels of the Civil Service, represented more particularly in this instance by Sir Eric Bamford, Director-General of the M.O.I., are anxious to find means of ensuring the proper establishment of the liaison role.

It is also said—though no statement has been made as we go to press—that a committee has been set up at the M.O.I. to report and make recommendations on the procedure and organisation of the visual information service under the C.I.O. It appears that this committee will be representative of creators and administrators on equal terms—numerically as well as otherwise. If this is so, we congratulate the Director-General in double measure for a further step towards ensuring that every opportunity be given to all parties concerned in the creation of an information service worthy of the tasks before it.

It is to be hoped that the committee will be empowered to co-opt, or to seek evidence from various bodies such as A.C.T. and the Federation of Documentary Film Units, as well as from individuals at present not inside the Civil Service but with special knowledge of informational techniques and needs. The moment is ripe for constructive and far-sighted measures.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

THAT THE Government should have invited John Grierson to Britain to advise them on film problems is a fact of considerable significance. Grierson's presence in this country at the period when the setting up of the new Central Information Office is under urgent consideration has been welcomed by all sensible people in the fields of film and of education. Looking further forward, we note with satisfaction that Grierson's main preoccupation is now to be in the international field—a logical and essential extension of the purpose and practice of Documentary. The triumphant success, and electrifyingly rapid development of the National Film Board of Canada were due to Grierson's far-sighted planning and administration based on all that was possible in the earlier experience of documentary in this country. There are now many active centres of documentary in Europe and in the New World. The co-ordination of their work to international purposes is a job in which no one is better fitted than Grierson. It is already known that a major part of his plans involves the creation of a regular output of films on international events and affairs; and it is obvious that such an output will establish on world screens a clear exposition of the purposes and activities of the United Nations. In these activities Grierson will have the fullest backing from everyone in this country.

Two-way Traffic Wanted

IF OUR EUROPEAN colleagues and allies are to support our films on the Continent, it is obvious that we must reciprocate by helping Continental films to circulate in Britain and to reach the kind of audience for which they are intended. So far as we know neither the M.O.I. nor the British Council has done anything to encourage this two-way traffic and has afforded no one the opportunity of seeing the best work from France, Denmark, Holland or Czechoslovakia. A centre must be set up, either by the British Council or the Ministry of Information or by both, to which our film colleagues overseas can look for help and encouragement. It is not only reciprocity that is needed; our system of overseas film representation needs overhauling. The M.O.I. officers are mainly legacies of the SHAEF film fiasco. Of the original appointments, some proved to be collaborators and had to be got rid of in a hurry; others have crawled back into one hole or another; most of the remainder seem ignorant of, or even hostile to, the film as a medium of culture. British Council film officers seem to regard themselves less as cultural film ambassadors than as salesmen of British Council films. The scientific film conference in Paris provides a case in point. According to the printed programme the Ministry of Information officers had supplied the excellent *Surgery in Chest Diseases*, but had not attempted to put a representative British programme on the screen. Almost by accident The Scientific Film Association was able, with the help of the Ministry of Information's London offices, to send a representative to Paris, who was able to screen *World of Plenty* and *Potato Blight*. From French press reports and other information from French sources it would seem that the former film captured the conference, though neither government agency on the spot had the wit to realise its potential importance. It is time that both the M.O.I. and the British Council developed a sense of responsibility in these matters.

M.O.I. Please Note

THE BRITISH COUNCIL writes: "Under *Notes of the Month* in the last issue of D.N.L., you chide the M.O.I. for not recording films in Afrikaans. It is perhaps worth while letting you know that all Council films that go to South Africa are recorded in Afrikaans as well as in English." If the British Council finds it worth while to put their films into Afrikaans, the M.O.I. behaviour in not doing so seems more inexplicable than ever.

Comings and Goings

GEOFFREY BELL has left the Shell Film Unit and joined Film Centre, moving from documentary direction to production. He was at Shell from 1937–1945. Bell is Hon. Secretary of the London Scientific Film Society and Council Member of the Scientific Film Association. Another new recruit to Film Centre is George Bennell, M.A., B.Sc., M.R.S.T., who is to develop an Education Section. Bennell comes from University College School with a wide experience of the use of visual aids. In 1928 he began making films for athletics and O.T.C. training; during the last few years he has greatly extended the use of audio-visual material in the teaching of General Science.

The documentary world generally is conscious of the need for expert advice from the teaching profession in developing classroom film techniques, and Realist Film Unit are to be congratulated on the arrival of Miss Dorothy Grayson, B.Sc., who has joined them as Educational Film Producer in collaboration with John Taylor. Her work at the British Film Institute was one of the more distinguished of that organisation's activities.

We wish Miss Grayson and Mr. Bennell every success in the very important and difficult jobs which they have undertaken.

FILMS FOR CHILDREN

(The special Saturday morning cinema shows for children have for a long time been a matter of great concern to all those interested in the influence of the film on the youth of this country. We therefore welcome the recent article in "The Times" on this subject and gratefully acknowledge the Editor's permission to reprint it in full.)

In the course of a sociological inquiry into the film in British life your Correspondent spent a score of Saturday mornings in Odeon and Gaumont-British children's cinema clubs in three widely different parts of the country. Each time he sat among the children in order to observe their behaviour, expressions, and attitudes. Sometimes his assistants came, too, to check his own observations; and he took children (and their mothers) with him whose home and school life he knew intimately.

Since the conduct of these clubs is guided by strict central directions, and since they receive their films from two central offices, the impressions derived from these visits may provide a reliable indication of the type of entertainment which will be offered to several hundreds of thousands of young children every week when the clubs resume their activities on a full scale. Children are enrolled in the clubs without any charge for membership, but pay 6*d.* or 9*d.* for each performance they attend. They appear to be admitted from the age of four or five, though the Gaumont-British clubs require children under seven to be accompanied by older ones. The clubs act to a certain extent as nurseries, especially in the poorer districts, affording working class mothers an opportunity for shopping on Saturday mornings.

The Gaumont-British clubs make an effort to enlist the collaboration of local education authorities, though the writer has seen no evidence of such outside expert influence in any of the clubs he has visited. The Odeon clubs, on the other hand, appear to be entirely run by the central office and the local managers. Those managers who like their work show considerable understanding and tenderness in dealing with all the problems which arise when large numbers of children are crowded together; other managers prefer to be correct and orderly and extinguish any child-like atmosphere in their club's proceedings.

A TYPICAL MATINEE

What happens at a typical children's *matinée*? Hundreds of children coming in see coloured (and usually crude) slides on the screen: "It pays if you say thank you and please", or "Odeon Billy wishes you not to push when you are waiting in a queue", and so forth. Then the club "hymn" is sung:—

To the Odeon we come
To have our fun . . .
We are thousands strong
So we can't be wrong

and more in similar vein. (The Gaumont-British clubs have no hymn.) Then follows the club promise—to obey one's parents, to be kind to animals, to make this country "a better place to live in"—and the singing of the National Anthem.

The performance begins. First, an animal cartoon picture, usually not a genuine Walt Disney product but one of those plagiarisms which copy Disney's technique but lack his taste. Next, a full-length picture. Occasionally good films, like *My Friend Flicka*, are shown, but it appears that "Westerns" or supposedly "comic" pictures of 10 or 15 years ago are usually considered appropriate for children. There are even films which antedate the familiar Tarzan pictures showing animals almost killing human beings in strangely absurd cinema landscapes; and some of the children are undoubtedly frightened and horrified. The writer's own son refused, after he and a friend of his—they were then nine—had attended two or three shows, to take further interest in his father's sociological curiosity.

Last comes the serial story of American origin, such as *Don Winslow of the Navy*. These films seem to have no coherent plot. A considerable amount of shooting goes on, with nerve-racking persecutions of the bad men who have kidnapped the beautiful innocent blonde secretary. To the children the serials are the high spot of the programme, but their psychological effects are deplored by psychological experts. As the writer sees it, the children are left at a high pitch of expectation for next week's show, with their daydreams poisoned and their play influenced by an utterly artificial unreality. And, whatever may be true of adults, it is extremely doubtful whether children appreciate the "good moral lessons" with which it is fashionable to conclude these films. From time to time good geographical or travel pictures are shown between the cartoons and the main film, but there are also films of another type.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

In the writer's opinion children under seven should not go to the cinema at all, even if accompanied, except on condition that special films for tiny ones are made, as they are understood to be made in Canada. But such films cannot be made without the effective assistance of child psychologists, the existence of whom appears so far not to have been discovered by the British film industry.

When your correspondent discussed this matter with those responsible for selecting the films, one person confessed that he was far from able to see all the films sent out to the children's clubs. Another argued, quite rightly, that the supply of films suitable for children is far from sufficient, though new children's films are being made which will in time replace those which are objectionable. The new films so far produced are, however, with perhaps one exception, unsatisfactory and insignificant, though evidently well-intended. Some people in the industry add that, anyway, their job is to provide "entertainment, not education". Yet it is not possible to provide entertainment divorced from moral and psychological norms. Even if it is intended to give nothing but "pure" entertainment, the child's power of visualisation creates moral patterns. As matters stand several hundreds of thousands of children will soon be constantly subject to an influence in this regard which is far below the level of the rules and standards of our educational system.

This is not the intention of those who run the clubs. But the task they undertake requires a high and most carefully organised spiritual, mental, and technical equipment. The film industry has reached a stage where the old "showman" type, however well meaning, must genuinely enlist the effective and whole-hearted co-operation of the social scientist, the educationist, the psychologist, and, last but not least, of the children themselves, and not merely make an outward show of doing so.

PUBLIC SUPERVISION

There is evident need for expert public supervision of the films shown to children, though the form of such supervision requires detailed examination. Certainly there is a case for the education authorities to intervene vigorously, employing full-time and well qualified persons to make their supervision effective. Only the best producers and directors should be concerned with the making of children's films, as is the practice most notably in Russia, from which there is much to be learned. Nor can it be said that films given a "U" certificate (for universal exhibition) by the British

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THE CHAIN AND THE LINKS

Impressions of a Film Officer in Latin America

(In Santiago, which is a large city, the Non-theatrical films organisation depends almost entirely for transport on a Chevrolet converted van. This is normally driven by a certain Señor Aveline López, who also ranks as head operator. Unfortunately, of López' three possible assistants, none is competent to drive the van; and during a recent period when López fell ill, the Films Officer himself took over his duties, as this seemed an admirable opportunity for a first-hand check on the work being done; it is one thing to supervise the work and obtain detailed reports, and quite another to see for oneself, on the spot. For this reason the following impressions, by the Films Officer, of his experiences may be of interest.)

NINETEEN-FORTY; a bright autumn day. Somewhere in London stands a man with a film camera. He is making a film about London Transport.[1] There is a blitz on; the atomic bomb is still a secret thing of the distant future, but a London blitz, 1940 vintage, is not a joke. An air battle goes on, out of sight, almost out of hearing, very far overhead. It leaves in the sky those curious white vapour trails, from aeroplanes in fast flight. The cameraman sees a chance for a good shot. He gets the vapour trails above the façade of a building, with a lamp in the foreground to give distance . . . from here, shift to an omnibus, a line of omnibuses; London Transport goes on, as the vapour trails very slowly dissolve.

The cameraman is the first link. Then come laboratory, titling, packing, dispatch . . . (torpedoes, a cold sea, perhaps death . . .).

And so we come to the last link in the chain.

* * *

Nineteen-forty-five. By the calendar, it is winter, or very early spring. By English standards, it might be summer. A big school, run by Canadian priests for eight hundred Chilean boys; only four hundred can fit into the hall at one time. The priests are kindly, but a little vague; the boys come tumbling in, clean, neatly dressed, but noisy as a kennelful of puppies. They squabble over seats. They crowd round the projector. They ask—the eternal question from schoolboys—"Have you brought a comic?" We haven't. We console them with stories of London Transport's railway trains. Lights out. But the talking and chattering by no means stop. The assistant operator, with much experience, tells me gloomily that "this is the worst school of the lot; we might as well show silent films". It is true that only those well up in front can hear the commentary . . . and none of them seem to be paying a great deal of attention . . . are we wasting our time? Is the last link too weak to carry the message which started, in London, in 1940?

As we go from London to Quebec,[2] from Quebec to Caen,[3] and back to England for a "Cinesports", I wonder about this. Leaving aside Quebec and Caen, and considering London . . . they have seen, at any rate, the tube trains, the buses, the trams; neatness, order, efficiency. They live, and many of them will continue to live, these boys, in Santiago, a city notable for the chaotic condition of its transport. Many of them have parents in the car-owning class—but even so. . . . We cannot even begin to underline the point. We cannot even whisper that British organisation, even in wartime, means you can get from place to place in relative comfort, whereas in Santiago, even in peacetime, it is too often a major battle to get on a tramcar. *Estames en Chile.* But even so ("Now boys, please go out *quietly*!")—even so, if just a few of these youngsters, the next time they try to climb on to a crowded omnibus remember fleetingly that "they do these things better in London", then, perhaps, we are not wasting our time.

Nineteen-forty-five. A Crown Film Unit camera outfit chasing the flying-bombs all over London to catch and film one as it falls[4]. . . .

And for the last link, let us go somewhere very different. Another school; but a school far from the centre of Santiago, a Chilean State school, a poor school for poor children in a poor street. There is nothing in way of an assembly hall here; there is, at the back of the ramshackle building, a "patio" . . . in England it might by courtesy be called a back-yard. Benches are brought. We seek some sort of electricity supply, and eventually find it in the "kitchen"—a wooden, lean-to shack separated from the main building, and remaining erect, presumably, through the sheer will-power of the cook. Many of the boys are dressed in little better than rags; but they crowd round the projector, just like their clean and well-dressed fellow-citizens in the other school, and . . . "Have you brought a comic?" One boy seems shy, but he wants to ask a question. He waits till we have connected up, and the rest are scrambling for seats. He is no better dressed than any of them, but: "Have you brought a newsreel showing the atomic bomb?" The better-dressed ones never asked that.

The best we can do for him, at the moment, is the flying bombs. But there is another contrast; these boys can hear as well as see what is being shown them. Before we start, the "director" of the school, a large man with a paunch who probably gets paid a salary slightly better than that of a junior typist in a commercial firm, gets to his feet: "Now boys, you are not in a theatre, nor is this a 'fiesta"; you are in school" (it is eight o'clock in the evening, and no one compelled these boys to stay behind). "There will be no shouting, or talking, or giggling; you will please behave yourselves." The "director" has personality; there is no trouble. Did he, perhaps, tell them about the atomic bomb? Or do they think for themselves, perhaps with their parents' help? . . . Here, at any rate, we are not wasting our time.

One could go on indefinitely; but it would become boring. Let us end with a few fleeting, and disconnected, impressions.

Girls are nearly always better behaved than boys (as regards film shows). We went to one State school for girls, a big modern school in a large, light, airy building. The assistant operator, on the way there, said: "This is one of the best places." I soon saw why, from his point of view; this school always has its shows at five o'clock, and they invite the operators to tea beforehand (coffee, really, but very good). This school has its shows in the gymnasium. The girls sit in rows on the floor. They are quite silent throughout; one cannot tell if they are interested, bored, or just well-disciplined. But as we packed up the apparatus afterwards, a group in a corner was practising a dance movement they had just seen in a physical-training film,[5] and getting it more or less right. At any rate they had not been asleep.

* * *

An open-air show, away at the back of beyond. An unpaved street, full of mudholes. The long-suffering van crawls over and through them to a dingy house indicated by my long-suffering assistant, and stops. It is instantly mobbed. "Peliculas . . . peliculas!" Assisted by far too many willing hands, we get out and set up the apparatus. Our initial audience is about a hundred and fifty; we project against the wall of a house across the road, and there is, as always with open-air shows, much climbing of ladders to obtain electricity from highly unlikely and dangerous places. Within ten minutes we have about a thousand people watching, in awed silence, the shots from the German concentration camps.[6]

The poorest people are always the most hospitable. The man at whose invitation we went insists that we have a glass of wine with him. We learn that all these people live quite a long way from the nearest cinema (and a fair way even from the nearest tramline); they will willingly stand for an hour in the street to see films. There are, in Santiago, more isolated spots like this than one supposes; and in fine weather they are among the best places to visit, from the point of view of results.

The "Cinesports" series is always remarkably popular. I have only heard one adverse comment. An elderly teacher at a girls' school suggested to me that possibly scenes of men boxing and wrestling were "a little brutal . . . not very good propaganda for the English, who after all were always *gentlemen*."

Señor Don Emilio Gonzalez, second-in-command of films and in charge of programmation and organisational details, lost a son at the hands of Franco's men in the Spanish Civil War. He will never tell anyone the details; but when he first saw B.O.N. 256 (concentration camps) he made a sort of vow with himself to show it to everybody in Santiago. At the present rate of progress he will probably succeed. Incidentally, this newsreel, when it first arrived on 35 mm., was censored here "adults only". In spite of this, we took a deliberate risk with the 16 mm. copy, and we show it everywhere we can. So far, we have never had even a suspicion of a complaint, although we show it in schools.

And so it goes on; modern, up-to-date schools, social and political clubs, ill-lit streets which are almost slums. The last link in the chain. Perhaps the other links would care to know that, as far as we can tell, the message does get through.

* * *

[1] City Bound
[2] Peoples of Quebec (Canadian)
[3] You Can't Kill a City
[4] V.I.
[5] Invitation to the Dance
[6] B.O.N. 256

THE DARTINGTON HALL FILM UNIT

An Educational Experiment

THE DARTINGTON HALL FILM UNIT was started in 1934 by the late William Hunter, a master at Dartington Hall School. There was at that time —and it is still true—very little in the way of even moderately good class-room films. Hunter felt that more information was needed about the kind of film that was useful in class-teaching: there was clearly no future for film regarded either as a substitute for the class-lesson, or as semi-entertainment—movie-jam to coat the class-room powder. What the teacher wanted was a technique of illustration to supplement the text-book, the spoken word or the blackboard. Hunter started to experiment with films in his own subject, geography.

He had certain advantages: technical knowledge, artistic flair, and the background of a progressive school and of an estate carrying on a number of rural industries associated with the geography of the region. He produced films that were successful teaching instruments; by 1940, about a dozen were in general circulation. By this time the Unit had grown out of the space available in the School, and it was transferred to the Arts Department, with an endowment of £400 a year. Further, Penguin Books Ltd. made a production grant towards a new series—Puffin Films—on agricultural topics. All this constituted a great advance on previous resources. But now the war drastically affected plans; it was not clear, with growing restrictions, to what extent the Unit would be able to continue.

Early in 1941 the Unit was asked by the newly-created Film Council of the South-West to undertake the management of a small educational film library. Petroleum Films Bureau increased this by adding their instructional films to it. At the same time the Ministry of Information was considering the formation of regional libraries for the circulation of their films, and decided to make use of the Unit.

Hunter's departure into the R.A.F. at the end of 1941 created a serious problem. His pioneer work was just beginning to make headway; if the Unit ceased to exist, the ground would be lost. It was decided to carry on, and at least keep the Unit alive until his return. His death in February, 1943 was an unexpected and irreparable disaster. But it seemed now even more important that the experience should not be wasted, and production has continued, not at the level that anyone would have thought ideal, but at the level that was possible in the existing man-power and material position. Productions to date total 24 films, in 40 reels. It is now clear that the Unit must as soon as possible get on to a more professional level than hitherto, still specialising in 16 mm. silent educational films of the type that its location makes peculiarly possible.

Up to 1940, weekly dispatches of D.H. films seldom reached double figures, and revenue was negligible. 1945 showed an income from sale and hire of close on £1,000, and for the first time the Unit could have paid its way without endowment or production grants. While there is probably no future—nor, in the writer's view, should there be—for an educational unit based on the sale and hire of prints, the revenue figures are of interest as an index of demand. The distribution of M.O.I. films has likewise expanded rapidly; the Unit now serves over 200 sound and 30 silent 16 mm. projectors in the region, and dispatches about 1,000 reels a month.

To sum up the experience of the past eleven years, there is first of all a considerable and unsatisfied demand for class-room films which are widely sought after even when they do not reach high technical quality in photography or direction. Secondly, an educational film unit need not be an expensive business; the quality of 16 mm. production can now be—though it still seldom is—as good as standard and the costs are almost absurdly small, even as compared with the modest scale of documentary. Finally, there is an advantage in a small production unit being linked with regional distribution. It can thus serve three related purposes. It can be an advisory centre, and since regional needs and preoccupations differ it is in many respects better able to give such advice than a central body; it can run a film library for schools and other organisations with their own projectors and run a mobile projector service on the M.O.I. model; it can undertake experiments, or produce specialised films at a cost that is within the

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CANADIAN COLOUR SCHEME

WHILE we have been jogging along filming everything in black and white, Canada, true to her history, has been blazing a new trail. Kodachrome sixteen millimetre is the tool she is using and a pretty dazzling one it is too. In fact it looks as though black and white films for non-theatrical showing might as well pack up. And if you think that this is exaggerating things a bit, just try seeing one of our films after seeing one from Canada. I am not suggesting that we should use colour for colour's sake but there is no doubt that the impact of a colour sub-standard is much greater than the equivalent black and white. The subject is more alive and the whole film more pleasant to watch.

At a representative showing the other day we saw *Flight of the Dragon*, a film on Chinese art, *Salmon Run*, a film about the rumbustiously named Sockeye salmon, *Face of Time*, a geological survey, *Life on the Western Marshes*, a film of bird life and an organisation with the odd name of Ducks Unlimited, *Eskimo Arts and Crafts*, which was about what the title said it was about and *Ski in the Valley of the Saints*, a tourist-come-hither piece. All of them were nice to look at, all were on Kodachrome and the whole affair was a great pleasure to the eye. I should say that during their making the cameramen had grappled with most of the major problems which one might meet in connection with colour. In the ski film there were interiors with a lot of colour which were successful except for the poor rendering of flesh tones. Attention to make-up will, in time, probably get over this. In the geology film there were laboratory interiors which came off very well. In the same film there had obviously been trouble with the maps. The different colours tended to obscure the wording, but they did not look as though they would have been very good maps in black and white anyway. In the film about salmon two problems were faced and overcome successfully. The exteriors shot at different places matched very well except for one shot of a Reckitts blue sea and, incidentally, the sea always seems a special problem for any colour system as anybody who saw Western Approaches will remember; in order to get individual salmon scuttering across the shallow water of the spawning grounds the cameraman had obviously had to snatch shoot and this did not seem to have upset anything very much. The major drawback to Kodachrome is that dissolves still have to be made in the camera or not at all, so, unless the picture is *following* the commentary very closely, there are some rather awkward bumps, especially from exteriors to maps, for instance.

Of course Kodachrome is nothing very new in the film arsenal but it would appear from these films that it is becoming a weapon of much greater precision and usability. It may be that cameramen are getting more experienced in the use of it (or that they still stow away thousands of feet of cut-outs in the vaults without telling anyone) but judging by the overall smoothness of the films we have seen, it presents no major obstacles to the would-be user. There is no sign that anyone is trying to use it dramatically but then I do not see that there is very much opportunity for this in the general rough and tumble of documentary film making. There's the subject in front of you and you have to make the best of the colour as you go along. Unless of course you want to emulate the gardeners in Alice in Wonderland. This of course brings us to the major defect of colour as far as documentary is concerned. It does tend to exaggerate all colours except pastel shades and thus, while it gives the picture an added interest, it also makes everything slightly unreal. Perhaps our tired eyes no longer see colours as they are and that they do in fact glow and shout and make a noise and that we have merely learnt to neutralise them to get a little visual peace. They certainly look a bit odd on the screen when applied to ordinary life. Whether this difficulty will be overcome by the lens or the stock or whether we shall just learn to accept them as we accept so many other conventions about the screen remains to be seen.

The films I have mentioned are only a few of a large programme of colour films from Canada and these few notes on them are only nibblings at the edge of a large and important subject. Over here, shortage of stock, the difficulties of obtaining good prints, and lack of plant to meet professional needs, holds up any large scale developments, but they are bound to come. Colour gives the film an extra strength as well as a great deal of extra pleasure to the viewer and our vast non-theatrical audiences will want to see it used. So, whatever our prejudices against working in 16 mm. and our aesthetic views on the selective use of colour may be, it is worth while considering the whole matter carefully now, before we find that times have changed and left us with a hard sprint ahead of us.

ARMY EXPERIMENTS IN FILM PRESENTATION

by J. D. Forman

HOW MEMORABLE is knowledge imparted through the medium of the screen? The educational value of the documentary film depends largely on the answer to this question. During the war the Army has carried out experiments which, if they do not give a comprehensive answer, at least throw some interesting sidelights on the subject.

Learning depends on three main factors, Motivation, Understanding and Retention. A man goes to a cocktail party where he is introduced to several people, including an attractive girl and the director of a firm in which he hopes for employment. On leaving the party he remembers the names of these two and has forgotten all the remainder. That is learning due to motivation. All evidence shows that the film can be completely successful as an agent for motivation. Films such as *The New Lot, The Way Ahead,* etc., reconcile the recruit to anomalies of Army life and increase his training receptivity. A class which has seen the film *Next of Kin* will show a better learning curve in a lecture on security than one which has not. Motivation films, however, only open the way to learning, they attempt not to inculcate knowledge but to produce a favourable attitude of mind. They can achieve their full effect by a normal showing in the way of an entertainment film.

The film which is concerned with Understanding and Retention of knowledge, however, demands a drastic difference in treatment. These films called for convenience *factual* films, have two main factors which limit their success. The first is retroactive inhibition. Even with an attentive audience, in a 30-minute film of concentrated fact, indigestion occurs after the first 10 minutes; the matter absorbed in the last 15 minutes drives out the facts assimilated earlier.

The second factor is the lack of class activity. Investigation shows that an average class of students attending an instructional film in a day of high mental and physical activity record the following reaction—"Thank God, now I can relax. Enjoyable or not, this film will at least give us time to sit back and rest, safe from the instructor's probe." The association of the atmosphere of the film with entertainment is hard to break. It is fair to say that on a plain factual subject no efforts of the director or camera-man will counterbalance forty minutes of unbroken warmth and darkness in the middle of an active day's instruction.

The technique in use in the Army was to show a factual film through, to discuss it and then to show it through a second time. This entailed a certain amount of class activity, but in many cases the amount of knowledge retained was still low. Many different techniques were tested, the one described below emerging as the most successful for general application.

(1) The film was previewed and carefully studied by the instructor, who broke it up into convenient sequences of not less than two to three minutes showing time and not more than ten.
(2) Before showing, the object of the whole period was explained to the class.
(3) A set of two or three questions on the first sequence was dictated to the class, and they were warned that they would be expected to supply the answers.
(4) The first sequence was shown in the normal way and at the end the instructor stimulated a discussion amongst the class on the answers to the questions, being careful not to lay down any opinion or solution of his own.
(5) The first sequence was shown a second time with the instructor answering each question as it was on the screen. A microphone linked with the speaker was used, the operator fading out the sound track when necessary.
(6) The instructor gave a short summary of the sequence either orally or visually on a blackboard.
(7) Subsequent sequences were treated in the same manner.
(8) Three days later a quiz on the whole film was set for the class.

This technique has many advantages. At the film shows, the student is mentally on tip-toe, the first time to find the answers to the questions, the second time to hear if his answer was correct. There is complete class-participation and class-activity. Instead of the impersonal commentator giving the period (for whom the student does not give a damn) it is done by his own instructor (for whose good opinion he gives a great deal). Retroactive inhibition is avoided, each phase is thoroughly digested. Each lesson is driven home by the instructor as it is actually on the screen. Finally, the considered summary of the instructor drives home with overbearing conviction after the usually inadequate student discussion.

It has disadvantages too. Only fifteen minutes of running time can be shown in a forty-five minute period. The instructor must be good, and he must devote a great deal of time to preliminary study. The subject of the film must be sufficiently important and the film itself must be of sufficient value to merit such an intensive study. Assuming, however, that it is important for the matter of the film to be thoroughly assimilated, there is no doubt that this new technique succeeds where the old one failed, as can be seen from the results of the following test.

A film of concentrated fact dealing with the organisation and duties of a military formation, which ran for twenty-five minutes, was selected as the subject. Two samples of forty students of the same age, training, experience and ability were shown the film. Class A saw it the old way—once through; discuss; once through again. The same instructor presented the film to class B, using the new technique. In this case the discussion between the showings in the old method had to be so exhaustive that the respective experiments both covered two periods of forty-five minutes. Three days later an examination paper on the film was set to both classes. Class A scored an average percentage of 28.6 marks, class B scored 78.3 marks.

The treatment of highly technical films may have to be even more intensive. In some cases (e.g., the action of the 4-stroke engine) it may be wise to run a film loop in constant repetition until the class, by concentrating on one feature at a time, has mastered the several and distinct processes at work.

Other experiments have aimed to lift the film down from its pedestal of self-sufficiency and to bring it to the aid of the instructor wherever it can usefully serve him. Thus short Film Flashes form an integral part of many lectures. They can be used to motivate, to explain or demonstrate. In an introductory lecture on Artillery the period is started by a three-minute sequence of the barrage before Alamein from the film *Desert Victory*, ending on the line—"The Infantry reached their objective, the barrage had done its work." The lights go up, the lecturer picks up his cue "The barrage had done its work.—Gentlemen, the Royal Artillery is the Infantryman's greatest friend. . . ." The class are in the right frame of mind. Again, in a lecture on Tank-Infantry Co-operation, the lecturer explains the somewhat confusing terms Hull-down and Turret-down by showing the diagrammatic and live sequence from the film *The Single Track*. The film is used, in fact, as an animated visual and aural aid.

Enough has been said to demonstrate the Army's approach to the subject. Unfortunately the experiments were carried out only at the presentation end. Similar experiments in civilian educational films embracing both production and presentation have great possibilities. Fortunately there is no place in educational films for the whims of the professional critic. The film sets out to do a job. Its success can be gauged by the statistician and the psychologist in hard figures.

URGENTLY NEEDED: "D.N.L." copies of No. 5, Vol. 4, and Nos. 3, 4 and 5, Vol. 5. We shall be glad if subscribers who have the above copies will sell them back to us (at 2/- per copy) as we need them to complete sets for binding.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH

by a member of the Shell Film Unit

RECENTLY, at the Shell Film Unit, we launched into a new educational series of films on the theory of flight. The series is planned for a limited distribution, being designed for the use of people in some way connected with aviation, as flying pupils, workers, or R.A.F. personnel, and also for the senior forms of secondary schools. As the first film neared completion, we considered the idea of showing it, in its cutting copy form, to the types of audience for whom it was intended.

Two reasons prompted the decision to try out the film in this way: firstly, we wished to establish that the approach of the film itself was sensible and adequate; secondly, we were anxious to discover how worth while it might be to pursue audience reaction tests as a regular stage in film making. After the final show to the experts who had advised in the making of the film, therefore, we arranged a special show of the cutting copy (commentary and picture) to each of three groups of people who together represented, as far as we could determine, future audiences. These groups were: a batch of R.A.F. aircrew personnel in the early stages of training (aged 19–31 years), a group of A.T.C. cadets (aged 14–19 years), and an audience of schoolboys (aged 13–17½ years). The numbers were, respectively, 15, 30 and 23. It may be argued that this did not give a broad enough survey on which to base any very sound conclusion. On the other hand, to arrange a detailed investigation involving audiences totalling several hundred people is, perhaps, beyond the scope of a small production unit. As it was, the limited enquiry, outlined above, took two to three weeks to organise, to record, and to analyse the results.

The first step was to prepare a questionnaire, the answers to which, we hoped, would indicate, not only the efficiency of the film in imparting its information, but also the reaction of the audiences to the film's style and approach. For convenience, the questionnaire was broadly divided into three sections, covering: (1) matters of opinion as to length of scene, commentator's voice, etc.; (2) matters of fact, the information contained in the film; and (3) details from the audience, such as other films they might have seen, which would have a bearing on their response to this film. Each show was prefaced by a spoken explanation briefly outlining its purpose; an attempt was also made to give the feeling that, by answering the questions carefully and honestly, the audience was, in fact, taking part in the making of the film. An even briefer written introduction to the questionnaire, which each member of the audience read before turning to the questions, emphasised what had been said. A special point was made of warning each audience that, although they were going to see an almost finished film, it was still at a rough state, when the odd noises, marks and scratches, common to all cutting copies, would be apparent. There is no doubt that such an introduction was essential in order to make the audience feel there was a serious purpose behind the show. It evoked an excellent response from most people, but perhaps did not go far enough to break down all the reserves of some of the service personnel.

The questionnaire was designed along familiar lines, a variety of answers being given to each question, from which the subject had to select one by underlining. Here is one example from each of the three sections of questions.

(1) Did the commentator speak:
too quickly, too slowly, about the right speed?

(2) Is the sideways pressure of the airflow in the narrower part of the venturi tube:
greater than, less than, the same as throughout the rest of the tube?

(3) Did you know the subject before you saw the film:
yes, no, partly?

In all, there were some forty questions asked, which, it was estimated, would take ten to fifteen minutes to answer. It was found that most people did complete the forms within this time, although, of course, it varied from individual to individual—and more surprisingly, perhaps, from group to group (the youngest group being collectively the quickest).

For convenience, the answers of each audience batch were recorded on a single sheet of graph paper according to a method developed by the Audience Reaction Committee of the London Scientific Film Society. A column, one small square wide, was devoted to each of the alternative answers to the questions; the answers given in the individual papers being recorded by a tick in the appropriate column along one line. In this way, reading across gave an individual's answers to all the questions, while reading down the three or four appropriate columns gave all the answers to any one question. At a glance, therefore, one could see where the majority answer lay. Apart from this eye-catching advantage, it was a useful way of condensing the matter in order to prepare a summary; for this represented a full record, allowing the bulky questionnaire forms to be destroyed or stored.

Before discussing the results, it is as well to remember that the film was shown in its cutting copy form. There is no doubt that the "build-ups", joins, "dust-crackle," and all the other evidence of hard work in the cutting room, disturbed the audience. Possibly this was unavoidable, since to wait until there is a married print before trying out a film does not suggest that one is going to be easily influenced to make changes by what the audience thinks of it. However, one can allow for this factor by discounting to some extent the answers which implied, for instance, that the scenes in the film were "jerky".

There are so many variables likely to affect an experiment of such a limited nature that one must be careful not to draw too sweeping deductions from the results. Probably, the only really reliable indications came from the section of questions testing the success of the film in presenting its facts. Here we found that, irrespective of audience group, there was a high proportion of correct answers: out of 18 questions of fact, 15 were answered correctly by all except for 2 or 3 out of each group. Although several members of the audience had already covered some of the ground in the film during their normal school lessons or training, most of the subject was sufficiently new for the foregoing to be taken as an indication that the film was fairly successful in presenting its information clearly on a first showing. An interesting fact emerging from the answers to this section of questions is that, as a whole, the audiences were less successful in dealing with questions of a general kind whose answers could be deduced from the film. Out of three questions designed to this end, the audiences answered only two with any degree of common accuracy, while the third question was not even attempted by more than a quarter of them. Since, however, they were specially asked not to tarry over the questions (so that we could be sure of gaining their first impressions), too little time for thought may have been the real reason for much of this apparent lack of success.

When assessing the answers to questions of opinion, one appears to be on even less sure ground, for opinion is more likely to be influenced by irrelevant matters; yet the majority of answers in most cases, were sufficiently alike from all three audience groups to suggest their validity. For instance, more than 90 per cent of each audience thought the commentary was spoken at the right speed; and some 70–75 per cent thought the commentator to be an expert, speaking with a pleasant voice a clear commentary that could not have been simpler and gave just about enough information (five questions). In some questions, however, although in each case the majority were of the same opinion, the proportion varied from group to group. As an example, we find 90 per cent of the schoolboys and of the R.A.F. personnel agreeing that the pauses between sentences of the commentary were, as a whole, too long, whereas rather less than 60 per cent of the A.T.C. cadet group thought this to be so. The later questions in this section covered points about visual presentation, evoking, in general, a more varied response. For instance, while some 60 per cent of the schoolboys considered each separate picture (or scene) to be too long, only about 50 per cent of the A.T.C. cadets were in agreement with this view; but this attitude was opposed by the group of R.A.F. personnel, 66 per cent of whom felt each scene to be about the right length. Without comparing the results of individual intelligence tests with these questionnaires, it is difficult to account for such opposite views, unless they can be taken as showing the greater professional interest of the R.A.F. in the subject.

The method of recording the answers, so that their trend can be appreciated at a glance, is revealing. One notices that in one group 3 out of 14 people feel that the commentator is "not an expert at all". Looking along the answers to the next two questions, one finds that two of these same three people think the commentary to be "sometimes clear and sometimes complicated" and the same two think further that the commentary "could have been simpler". Since these two people could have been sitting next to each other, there may be no other significance in their answers than that they were chatting to each other (this was observed with more than one group), missed the thread of the commentary and vented their disgust on the film. This kind of influence may be reflected, too, in the response to the question inviting individual comments or remarks, where it was noticeable that almost all the elder schoolboys filled up the space provided with suggestions and conclusions, encouraged less, perhaps, by spontaneity than by the accident of their having sat close enough together to be able to follow each other's example. Remarks, in general, were appreciative or constructive:

(*continued on page* 14)

FILMS OF 1945

Owing to shortage of space we have fallen behind with film reviews. Below we endeavour to correct the fault by giving brief notices of as many as possible of the films which we have missed. The fact that the notices are necessarily short does not mean that the films are any less important than ones previously reviewed at greater length; in this rapid tour we have only time to note the salient features. The following notes are edited from material supplied by several reviewers.

Firstly we would like to note the establishment of two new directors who are fulfilling their early promise. Ken Annakin and Budge Cooper, whose films are reviewed below, have shown in the past that they were directors whose work would be interesting to follow. Annakin's quick, rich, pictorial sense made his films a pleasure to watch, and Budge Cooper's warm and sympathetic handling of people gave her films a very moving quality. To these directorial capabilities, they are both adding a growing maturity and understanding.

Fenlands and **West Riding** (Green Park) are directed by Ken Annakin and most beautifully photographed by Peter Hennessy. To his feeling for the patterns of the countryside Annakin is adding an awareness of people and their ways of living. **Fenlands** is a lovely and informative film about that part of England where man fights a perpetual battle with waters. Notable sequences are those in which a man goes duck shooting with a strange miniature cannon, and the rebuilding of the flood-holding banks. The synchronous part of the film is not so deftly handled and there seemed no very good reason for ending the film on a note of visual lamentation, but these are minor points and do not spoil an excellent job. It is worth noting, in connection with the commentary, that the East Anglian dialect seems to be more easily understood the most. In **West Riding,** Annakin has caught the solidity of Yorkshire with great skill and this survey of its people and their work and play is, apart from a certain tendency to meander, a warm and satisfactory picture.

Also from Green Park comes **The Proud City,** made for M.O.I.; **Make Fruitful the Land,** and **Farmer's Boy,** both made for the British Council. The first of these, partly by commentary, partly by direct speech from Lord Latham, Sir Patrick Abercrombie and others, gives an impression of the huge scheme prepared by the L.C.C. for the re-planning of London. Unlike many films it is most interesting when it utilises models and animation to show what is proposed. More of this and a little less of conventional shooting would have led to a more practical and useful contribution to a theme which should interest all Londoners. **Proud City,** directed by Ralph Keene and produced by Edgar Anstey, is an excellent introduction to the subject of building a new London. **Make Fruitful the Land** is a Technicolor excursion into agriculture and the rotation of crops. Although it is always pleasant to look at, the film rather falls between two stools, being neither technical enough for teaching purposes nor simple and interesting enough for entertainment. The diagrams were very fresh and pleasantly drawn by W. M. Larkins but were not particularly well worked out as far as the animation was concerned. Briskly and efficiently **Farmer's Boy,** directed by Peter Price, tells us what goes on at an Agricultural Training College. It is very neat and crisp and does a useful job in emphasising the scientific approach to farming.

From Halas-Batchelor comes a Technicolor film called **Handling Ships,** made for the Admiralty. At first thought, animated drawings would seem the only means of showing precisely the right and wrong ways of bringing a ship into harbour. But if the pictures are really to teach they must be slower and smoother than is humanly possible by this method. Hence the technique is used here of combining models with drawings, so that the ships move smoothly and the wind and tide are represented by symbols. Except for a few fancy feet at the start, every part of the film is insistently lucid. Ingenuity is rigidly controlled; not a shot nor a colour effect is superfluous or over elaborate. **Handling Ships** is a first-rate example of a training film technique, which could be used with equal success for other subjects.

A short teaching film, **How a Motor Car Engine Works,** made by Verity for the Ford Motor Co., is also successful. It explains entirely by cartoon the function of the cylinders and pistons in making a motor car go. The animation, by T. R. Thumwood, is excellent, and the film is extremely clear and easy to understand. It also has the virtue of making you want to know how the other parts of the engine work. Altogether a first-class job, directed by Max Munden. For Horizon Films, Max Munden directed **Song of the People.** The script for this film was written by Munden and Paul Potts and the music is by Spolianski who has contributed one of his usual lively scores. It is a very odd film indeed and many people will find it rather irritating because of its lack of style or sparkle. The message of the film, which was made for the Co-operative Movement, is that workers must unite and the film tells, roughly, the story of the growth of the working class movement by means of re-enacted sequences from history (the most hazardous of all film endeavours), and a sound track worked out in terms of chorus and music. By the mere fact of its bravely breaking away from the more accepted manner of presenting such a subject it succeeds in being entertaining and impressive. The total result is slightly marred by the fact that some of the sung words are inaudible but this is a minor point and does not prevent enjoyment of half-an-hour of something new and fresh. From Verity comes **Chemists at Work,** a competently made but purposeless film. It belongs to that tiresome category of films. The Tour Round the Works. It is impossible to believe that there was not an excellent story to be told in the place where M & B 693 and Mepacrine are made, to mention only two of the products of which we are given the usual irritating glimpses.

In much the same manner, only this time in Technicolor, we are given a look at the optical glass industry in **Let's See.** Our reviewer could recall very little about this British Council film except that it was very nicely photographed and the colour was good. Another film, **Steam,** directed by Jimmy Rogers, with music by Clifton Parker, was commissioned by Messrs. Babcock and Wilcox for overseas showing to technical audiences. A brief history of the process of steam raising introduces the planning of a modern plant together with the use of its components. These are shown being manufactured and finally, assembled into a giant "high head" unit. The film is a modern saga of steam raising and richly deserves the superlatives that Hollywood is wont to bestow on its own successes. It is a pity that the excellence of the photography and setting should be marred by the monotony and stridency of the music.

Steel made for the British Council, and superbly well photographed in Technicolor by Jack Cardiff, turns out to be just a smashing advertisement for that particular colour process. Steel manufacture is a natural subject for colour fireworks and here we get a display that stays on the retina of the mind all the way home on the bus, and, indeed, much longer than that. Unfortunately the commentary hardly gets to the mind at all, so the meaning of steel to the community, and of British steel to the world, is not much illuminated.

Papworth Village Settlement (World Wide), directed by James Carr, is one of the most interesting films we have seen for a long time. It tells the story of the tuberculosis settlement with special emphasis on the rehabilitation of the patients. It is so skilfully made that it looks extremely simple but it is a simplicity that covers a thorough knowledge of the subject and results in a clear and moving exposition of the problem, its treatment and the results. It is an excellent story most warmly and happily directed.

From Realist comes **The Plan and the People,** directed by Frank Sainsbury. This presents the human angle on the L.C.C. plan for London. Heart warming is an abused epithet but that is what this film is. Plans on paper are all very well but eventually people have got to live in the plan. Here is the ordinary fellow's viewpoint in a series of human and understanding sequences. The enemies of the plan are presented in rather a grotesque light but the picture of their machinations is fair enough. Certainly the ordinary people shown in this film deserve the best of all possible plans.

All the skilful film-making in the world cannot completely save a poorly-conceived idea. **A Soldier Comes Home,** a fifteen minuter for the Ministry of Information, made by Gryphon Films, is apparently intended to warn waiting wives and husbands returning from the wars that they may have to face a period of psychological readjustment. Everyone has done their best to put this theme across but the basic idea was obviously never very clearly worked out and what might have been a useful film turns out to be an emotionally muddled rough sketch for a film yet to be made.

At the beginning of this series of reviews we mentioned the name of Miss Budge Cooper. Her film is called **Birthday** (D.A.T.A.), produced by Donald Alexander and photographed by Suschitsky. Its subject is how a baby is born and this is slightly mixed up with the problem of infant mortality in Scotland. Budge Cooper is rapidly proving that she is one of the best directors of ordinary people that documentary has produced. But despite her sympathetic handling of people the film is not successful. It starts off by explaining what a bad state of infant mortality there is in Scotland and how many mothers and children die each year. It then, without a break, explains how simple a process birth is,

if you understand the mechanics of it. There is an unnecessary framework of a soldier who is worried about his wife having her first child, and how he is consoled and brought to a realistic understanding of the process by his very unusual M.O. The film has obviously been mucked about with for reasons of policy and, as always in cases like this, suffers. But anyway, the film is perfectly directed and photographed. The diagrams are excellent. To blame are the people who did not have the courage to tell the disgraceful story of infant mortality in Scotland.

Personnel Selection, Recruits, from the Shell Film Unit, deals with personnel selection in the British Army, and is another brilliant example of documentary's growing power of handling people as well as ideas. The film gives an extremely comprehensive idea of exactly how the Army dealt with the problem of fitting square pegs into the squarest possible holes. Faced with an enormous intake of men with all sorts of aptitudes and varying levels of intelligence the Army devised tests of many kinds to sort the men out. The results of these tests give the Personnel Selection Officers a basis on which to work. The process is a thorough one and we are shown it in great and interesting detail; when demands come from different branches of the Army the Selection Department is ready with the right men for the right job. The film is so well made that one's interest is held right through although the film is a long one. This is not only due to the great care that has been taken to make every thing clear and comprehensible but is mainly because of Geoffrey Bell's very sensitive and human handling of the people in the film. The introduction of the tests for A.T.S. rather impeded the easy flow of the story and the very frightening sorting machine was never quite put across.

Homes for the People (Basic Films for the *Daily Herald*) is directed by Kay Mander and photographed by the late Pat Gay. This is a vigorous film covering an aspect of the subject already familiar to many, but by no means an easy one to tackle. Five housewives present the case for better housing in a series of interviews with the camera, their common experience of housing inadequacies suffered by so many people in Britain being the peg on which to hang a general survey of the situation. Rightly, none of these housewives is a glamour girl in any sense of the word; but, while the points each has to make are quite well put over, there is a monotony, almost a whine about their approach to the problems. A touch of robust humour in at least one of the interviews, apart from being representative of a very real trait in national character, would have emphasised—by bringing into greater relief—the circumscription of living under bad housing conditions. This film is a valuable aid to the ever-growing demand for national housing and should do much to encourage action in that direction.

The Crown Film Unit present **Father and Son,** an editing job based on material shot by Leon Schauder in the village of Tukumbu near Mombasa, in East Africa. The film deals with the battle between modern medicine and old magic, compass and chart as opposed to hoping for the best. Protaganist of the modern world is a young African sailor who returns from the Navy to visit his father who is a village elder. By simply stating the facts and leaving the audience to draw its own conclusions the film does an excellent job of posing a problem and its effect is only marred by the efforts of the commentator to dramatise the already sufficiently interesting subject.

For Strand Carl Heck directed **Chinese in Britain.** The film, by drawing parallels between Chinese and British activities, gives a pleasant picture of their lives in this country and their achievements here.

To the March of Time, the thorny problem of Palestine and Jewish immigration presents no terrors: they rush in with a presentation that completely ignores any considered views that the Arabs might hold. But for its failure to present a balanced argument, this issue, **Palestine Problem,** would rank as one of the best for some time. It is very well edited, with a high photographic quality, and gives an intelligent presentation of Jewish Palestinian achievements in trade, agriculture and social organisation.

Their other film, **Battle for Beauty,** may well prove to be one of the comedy hits of the year. Dedicated to the idea that American women regard the achievement of beauty as an end in itself this issue contains enough humour, conscious and unconscious, to send an average audience into convulsions. Coming so shortly after **Teen-Age Girls,** one feels that the March of Time is not doing quite its best for good Anglo-American relations.

FEATURE DOCUMENTARIES

THERE have been many long documentaries in 1945. **Burma Victory,** without overlooking the strategic aspects of the subject, gives an inspiring and moving picture of the men who sweated and fought in that grim campaign. This is a magnificent film. **The True Glory,** made by Carol Reed and Garson Kanin, was, quite apart from its other excellent qualities, distinguished by an inspiring and imaginative sound track. The pictures were finely chosen and assembled but were given a great and extra emotional impact by the beautifully written and spoken comments by the men of the Allied Forces plus a very great music score by William Alwyn. This film will last as an impressive record of the last months of the war. In **Journey Together** John Boulting brings great directorial skill to the story of the training of a bomber crew and their subsequent part in a raid on Berlin. Only a certain amount of indecision in the scripting prevent **Journey Together** from being a memorable film but cannot stop it from being a solid achievement and a fine record. **Today and Tomorrow** from World Wide has had an excellent reception on its first showing and we reserve comment for our next issue when we shall be able to give it more space. We also hope that Paul Rotha's new film, **Land of Promise,** will be available for review at the same time. One of the most exciting films of the year is **Diary for Timothy,** from the Crown Film Unit.

Directed by Humphrey Jennings, produced by Basil Wright, photographed by Fred Gamage, commentary by E. M. Forster and music by Richard Addinsell, this, like the **True Glory,** is the story of the last months of the war, but is set on this side of the Channel. It is told to baby Timothy, born on the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of war, in the form of a diary. The diary has four main characters: a wounded fighter pilot, a farmer, a coal miner, and a railway engine driver. The film tells of the battles and bad working conditions of the miners, the buzz bombs and the prospects for a better world in the future. But when Timothy grows up and sees his diary, he will not get a clear, wide or practical impression of what men did and felt in the last months of the second European war. What Timothy will see, though, is a film made by a director with rare imagination and skill. Humphrey Jennings, even if his thoughts are not quite clear in this particular film, uses sounds and pictures so ably that it does not matter much what the film is about. An unemotional boy's voice singing "Adeste Fidelis" played against a pan from steely cold water and frozen rushes up to a frozen landscape and up again to finish on a close-up of a frozen branch; a seventy-foot long close-up of a baby blowing bubbles, with the sound of a choir singing.

The film is so packed with ideas and experiments, skill and enthusiasm, that all you can do is to raise your hat to Jennings, and wish that he had had a clearer theme to work on. You will also want to raise your hat to Fred Gamage whose photography is above even the Crown Film Unit's standard. **Diary for Timothy** is good for general audiences, and excellent for anyone interested in films.

Perhaps because Norway stands out in the minds of most people as having shown integrity—that rare quality on the political field of World War II, **Return of the Vikings** (directed by Charles Frend, produced by Michael Balcon) easily captures a sympathetic interest in its subject—the part played by Norway during the war.

Reconstructed sequences of life and training in the Norwegian Army, in hospitals and rest hostels, contrast with scenes of the Norwegian countryside, of service-shot material of the Allied bombing of Gestapo headquarters in Oslo, of the whaling ships—perhaps the most outstanding sequence. It opens the film and introduces Gunnar the harpoonist. (His adventures after the invasion of Norway, when he joins the Norwegian Army and goes on a secret mission, tell the story of the film.) One might even say that a virtue is made of having to use different levels of photographic quality, and there is a variety in the treatment of sequences. But there is also a tendency for this variety to break down into shapelessness and the film is too long, largely it seems from a determination to refer to every aspect of the subject pictorially. This is a pity, because the handling of one or two brief sequences was sensitive and compelling. One which sticks in the mind shows Gunnar about to meet his wife and child who have escaped from Norway. They await him at a Norwegian centre in London. The simple shot of a door of a room, hiding his loved ones, becomes invested with his feeling of restrained impatience. And when they do meet? They embrace quietly. It's their small son who, unconcernedly, becomes the centre of feeling for them both—never in his few young years having met the father who now holds him, he is more interested in the paratroop insignia on this strange man's uniform.

As sensitive a handling of human relationships comes in **Painted Boats** (also from Ealing, directed by Charles Crichton, photographed by Douglas Slocombe). Barge-bred girl and boy are beset with problems of national service on unfamiliar land. The film, very well photographed and cut, has made us feel, with the girl, for the magic of living between slowly, steadily drifting banks of countryside, never tedious because always changing, and punctuated with the ritual of the locks.

Painted Boats and **Return of the Vikings** are very creditable examples of the now accepted incursion of the documentary idea into the second-feature world (they held the attention of West End audiences). Upon them the British feature directors of tomorrow are cutting their

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teeth and the second set should be good. But if brevity is the soul of wit, surely of film, the soul is brevity and shape.

FEATURES

THE STUDIOS are maintaining the high level that they set for themselves during the war. Ealing presents **Dead of Night,** a film whose credit list is as long as the film is excellent. This film, always entertaining and in certain sequences, notably that of the ventriloquist, memorable, is a very successful excursion into the field of the macabre. The script in particular, largely the work of John Baines, reaches a level seldom achieved in feature films. Ann Todd, Compton Bennet, Reg Wyer and Sidney Box have a deservedly great success with the **Seventh Veil.** This new organisation at Riverside holds great promise for the future. In their own puzzle corner manner Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger present **I Know Where I'm Going.** Here is great film-making skill, but it is rather wasted on a very slight anecdote which revolves round the question of whether you should marry for love or for money. Although the story is developed entirely in visual terms, a very rare and refreshing occurrence, the essential triviality of the theme plus the lack of plot make the film rather an ineffectual one. With great ballyhoo and sound of tuckets without, **Caesar and Cleopatra** has been launched into an alien world. Although our reviewer does not think that the story was worth filming or that the amount of money spent was necessary, and believes the whole thing was a lot of fuss about nothing in particular, he admits to having enjoyed the film very much indeed. The acting of Vivien Leigh was a delight to watch and she was more than ably supported by Claude Rains, Stewart Grainger, Basil Sidney and Cecil Parker. The film is very easy on the eye and the dialogue is a pleasure to listen to. An excellently adult evening's entertainment. From Independent Producers comes **The Rake's Progress,** directed by Sidney Gilliat. Direction, dialogue and production value are on a high level but the story somehow or other misses the mark. The Rake of the story is a cad and his Progress lacks both tragedy and pity, but as it is told with great skill and embellished by the performances of Rex Harrison, Lili Palmer and Margaret Will-she-or-won't-she-be-a-star Johnstone, it makes a pleasant enough entertainment.

Brief Encounter was a sorry affair. Impeccably directed and photographed (David Lean and Bob Krasker), this slight story of two middle-aged people in search of a bed became vaguely comic instead of being noble or pathetic. The comedy sequences were particularly inept and the film, apart from its polish, was chiefly remarkable for a splendid cinematic performance by the superb Celia Johnson.

Finally we have the odd developments at British National, where Lou Jackson is busy producing some very peculiar films. **Latin Quarter** and **Murder in Reverse** have one great advantage in common and that is they both are made with gusto. Each has a story to tell and is determined that you shall both watch and listen to it. In spite of some of the worst acting and dialogue seen for a long time they hold the attention in an ancient mariner fashion and you cannot tear yourself away. With an improvement in technique and no loss of enthusiasm Elstree may once again become a power in the film industry. a turbulently independent state on the edge of Rank's mighty empire.

FILMS REVIEWED

A Soldier Comes Home. M.O.I., Gryphon. 15 mins.
Battle for Beauty. M.O.T., 18 mins.
Birthday. M.O.I., Data. 20 mins.
Burma Victory. A.F.U. 65 mins.
Chemists at Work. May and Baker, Verity. 18 mins.
Chinese in Britain. M.O.I., Strand. 11 mins.
Diary for Timothy. M.O.I., Crown. 45 mins.
Farmer's Boy. Brit. Council, Green Park. 15 mins.
Father and Son. M.O.I., Crown. 15 mins.
Fenlands. M.O.I., Green Park. 19 mins.
Handling Ships. Admiralty, Halas Batchelor. 60 mins.
Homes for the People. Odhams, Basic. 23 mins.
How a Motor Car Engine Works. Ford, Verity. 20 mins.
Journey Together. M.O.I., R.A.F. F.U. 95 mins.
Land of Promise. Films of Fact. 60 mins.
Let's See. Brit. Council, Merton Park. 18 mins.
Make Fruitful the Land. Brit. Council, Green Park. 17 mins.
Palestine Problem. M.O.T. 18 mins.
Papworth Village Settlement. Brit. Council, World Wide. 20 mins.
Personnel Selection. M.O.I., Shell F.U. 63 mins.
Proud City. M.O.I., Green Park. 25 mins.
Song of the People. C.W.S., Horizon. 30 mins.
Steam. Babcock & Wilcox, Pub. Films. 55 mins.
Steel. Brit. Council, Merton Park. 35 mins.
The Plan and the People. M.O.I., Realist. 19 mins.
The True Glory. M.O.I. and O.W.I. 85 mins.
Today and Tomorrow. M.O.I., World Wide. 40 mins.
West Riding. Brit. Council, Green Park. 22 mins.

Films For Children (*continued from page 3*)

Board of Film Censors are automatically suitable for children. The Board does not appear to have either expert knowledge of, or expert advice on, child psychology.

The constructive potentialities of the children's cinemas are immense. Given good film material, available in sufficient quantity, and intelligent and responsible managements, the clubs could eventually become a valuable auxiliary instrument in education. The need and urge for entertainment can, indeed must, go together with education. Obtrusive moralising is abhorred by children, whether in the form of films, slides, or "club promises". Many local managers would, I believe, share in the request for a speedy and far-reaching reform of the present state of affairs.

Dartington Hall (*continued from page 5*)

capacity of a firm, a research institute, or an education authority, all of whose demands will fall wholly within the 16 mm. category. The cost of maintaining such a unit, with a complete professional team, would be in the order of £5,000 a year. This cost can be met without difficulty by a combination of officially sponsored production and distribution, and of private commissions, and the professional team would ensure the necessary technical quality. The encouragement of a dozen such units might well be part of our—so far non-existent—national policy about the future of documentary and educational film.

A FILM HISTORIAN

By Jean Benoit-Lévy

AT LONG last, the government of the United States has recognised the cinema as an art as well as an industry, and has created a department of film preservation in the Library of Congress. Miss Iris Barry, who is to head the staff which will recommend films for permanent deposit in the library, represents a fitting choice. Probably no other person in this country has done more than she to awaken the public to the importance of the cinema, and to attain for it the respect habitually given to literature and the fine arts.

Miss Barry began her film career as a founder-member of The Film Society in London, and as motion picture editor of the *Daily Mail*. In 1932, the New York Museum of Modern Art chose her to be curator of its newly formed Film Library. In that capacity she has built up one of the richest collections of films in the world—the only truly comprehensive one, including as it does pictures dating from the earliest products of Edison and Lumière to current features, documentaries, and shorts, of all types. Thanks to her intelligent action, at a time when governments were only mildly concerned or were even frankly indifferent, hundreds of early films have been saved for future generations. These films are the result of Miss Barry's earnest delving into the film vaults of most of the capitals of Europe, as well as research in the United States.

Under Miss Barry's direction, the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art serves the public in a variety of ways. There are daily screenings of films at the Museum, presented in such interesting series as: *The Basis of Modern Technique; Great Actresses of the Past; Ace Directors; The Social Film; The Comedy Tradition; The Documentary Film*, etc. To accompany these films, Miss Barry has prepared explanatory and critical notes. These are available at the Museum, but are perhaps even more valuable in the many schools throughout the United States who regularly borrow from the Library films of particular educational interest.

Miss Barry heads another department of the Museum of Modern Art, in which United States Films are re-edited for distribution in South America. This work was undertaken at the request of the Co-ordinator of Inter-American affairs.

In spite of the busy programme outlined thus far, Miss Barry finds time for writing about her beloved movies. Her books include: *Let's go to the Movies* (1925); *D. W. Griffith, American Film Master* (1940); and a translation of *History of the Motion Picture* by Bardeche and Brasillach (1936). She is a regular contributor to the book review columns of the *New York Herald Tribune*, and articles of hers have also appeared in *La Nacion, Ars, Tricolor*, the *Hollywood Quarterly* and the publications of the Writers' War Board.

To this brief sketch of her public career, I should have liked to add a real description of her personality, but I know she does not like to be put in the limelight. I can, however, say that under an appearance of airiness and behind paradoxical sayings, she hides a wealth of kindness and intelligence that works for the benefit of the many who come to her for help each year. Her modesty masks rich knowledge of the motion picture and enthusiastic understanding of this art. For Iris Barry is in fact both the cinema's historian and its critic. More than anyone else, she will have served to establish a system for the classification of films and for their evaluation, thus making possible the recognition of certain films or classics in their different schools. By preserving for now and the future the classic films, she furnishes us and our successors with the means of studying the past and through it to continue the evolution of an art no longer a child, but whose growth (in my opinion) was retarded by its having to learn to talk.

Naturally enough, Iris Barry as a successful and thoroughly likeable film historian, is an influential member of the International Federation of Film Libraries, an association composed of Museums that have taken on the responsibility of preserving examples of the great ages in the art whose short history is already so rich and so promising.

BOOK REVIEWS

Invitation to the Film. Liam O'Laoghaire. With a foreword by Frank Launder. (*The Kerryman, Tralee*. 1945. 7*s*. 6*d*.)

Invitation to the Film has four themes—the history of the cinema, the technique of the cinema, the use of the cinema by amateurs and for teaching, and the place of the film in the national life of Eire. Most people will find one of these themes interesting, and some people will be interested in them all. The history of the film is well done within the limits of some 30 pages. Though most of it is a summary of material already fairly well known, the story of the early history of the film in Ireland has not been told before. There is a good selection of stills from films of many countries.

The study of the technique of the film occupies about 60 pages. It perhaps takes too much for granted on the part of the reader. To be of real value to the novice, the descriptions of the processes of film making should have been more detailed. The study of the amateur film and the film in teaching is excellent, particularly the analysis of the costs and methods of making a sub-standard film. Mr. O'Laoghaire here speaks from a long and successful experience, and every amateur film maker will be interested to read what he says. His chapters on "The Film in the Classroom", "Film Appreciation" and "The Child and the Film" do not break new ground but sum up briefly the opinions of most progressive teachers and social workers.

Of particular interest to those studying the national use of the film are the later chapters in the book, in which Mr. O'Laoghaire makes a case for the development of a film industry in Eire. He points out that, though many countries have flourishing film industries, few countries devote much attention to training film workers. Eire is exceptional because, though she has a flourishing film school, she has no film industry. It is encouraging, too, to learn that Eire has not only an intelligent National Film Institute, but a flourishing film society with branches all over the country.

(*continued on next page*)

(*continued from previous page*)

Mr. O'Laoghaire proposes that the Government of Eire should set up and finance a national film studio. He believes that such an organisation could turn out between five and ten feature films a year, supported by between twenty and thirty short films. He points out that many continental countries succeeded in making good features for as small an amount as £15,000 (he will like to know that Denmark has a flourishing feature film industry with budgets which scarcely ever exceed £10,000). He thinks that Eire could make good features at £20,000. Provided that such films have novelty and appeal (and we may add, provided they rank for British feature quota) he believes they could bring back their production costs. Eire would, of course, have to rely on her export market to the United Kingdom and elsewhere, since the biggest gross of the most successful film in Eire cannot exceed £5,000, of which presumably, not more than £4,000 reaches the producer. He is on less safe ground when he attempts an estimate of the capital costs involved in setting up a studio and the running costs required for feature production. He would have been wiser to have gone to a better authority than the British Film Institute in the matters of film finance. He wishes to see the studio run by an Irish National Film Board, representative of the arts, the cinema, the film trade and education. He points out that a number of Irishmen have done well in films and he thinks they could be attracted back to Dublin. He hopes to make versions of his films in Gaelic.

Mr. O'Laoghaire even has a five-year plan. In the first year he would send trainees to study in English film studios. In the second year he would disperse these trainees to France, Sweden and Hollywood (why Sweden, whose films most people think dull and imitative?). By the third year, the studio and film laboratories would have been built and his trainees would be called back to plan production. In the fourth year he would produce two features (one to be handled by a foreign guest director) and ten short films. In the fifth year he would make five feature films (two to be directed by foreign guest directors) and 20 short films. Mr. O'Laoghaire's schemes seem practical. We hope the Government of Eire will act.

World of Plenty. Eric Knight and Paul Rotha, with diagrams designed by the Isotype Institute. (*Nicholson and Watson.* 1945. 1*s.* 6*d.*)

With this new publication Paul Rotha proves himself to be not only a splendid film maker but also an admirable maker of books. Like his films, his book has style, and it illustrates many of the special qualities of his craftsmanship—his skill in selecting an image to express a thought, and his skill in putting one image against another so that each is strengthened by the juxtaposition. *World of Plenty* is an outstanding film, telling its story with an ease and power which film makers all over the world admire. Its arguments might have been ephemeral moral propaganda: instead, they present proofs of the possibilities of future international relations which people everywhere sense instinctively can and must be achieved if the world is not to be snuffed out. The book from the film crystallises the arguments, and, since it is self-contained, it will be valued not only by those who admired or want to use the film, but by economists and politicians as well, whether they have seen the film or not.

FILM SOCIETIES

Dundee Film Society showed *Cambridge* and *Le Dernier Tournant* in its second programme on Sunday, October 28th. The third programme on Sunday, November 11th, consisted of *Malta Convoy*, followed by the British Council film of the sleep-walking scenes from "Macbeth". The programme ended with *Lone White Sail*. The fourth programme, on November 25th, consisted of *The Battle of Russia*, the fifth and last in a series of films made by the U.S. War Department and *L'Homme qui Cherche La Verite*. The last programme in 1945 was on Sunday, December. 9th. The films were *World of Plenty* and a Russian fairy tale called *Adventures in Bokhara*.

The Northern Counties' Children's Cinema Council opened its second series of "Films for the Classroom" with a science programme of silent and "mute" films. The eighth programme in the series "Films for Educationists" was given on Saturday, November 17th. The films were *A Maniprusi Village*, *Your Children's Teeth*, *Patterns of American Art*, *In Rural Maharathra*, *The Story of D.D.T.*, all from the Central Film Library. The ninth programme was on Saturday, December, 15th, and consisted of *A Better Tomorrow*, a U.S. documentary film on education from nursery to senior school, *Gaspe Codfishermen*, on life in a Quebec fishing village, *Your Children's Ears*, *Colour in Clay*, a British Council film, and *High Over the Border*. "Films for Young People" is the title of yet another series of film shows arranged by the Northern Counties' Children's Cinema Council, and a programme of silent and "mute" films under this heading was presented at the Little Theatre, Saltwell View, Gateshead, on Saturday, November 24th.

The Manchester and Salford Film Society has given a series of film shows at the Rivoli Cinema, Denmark Road, Rusholme, Manchester. The first performance on September 30th included *The Ten Year Plan*, a G.B.I. film on prefabricated houses, *Out of Chaos*, Jill Craigie's film intended to promote an interest in art and *Adventures in Bokhara*. On Sunday, October 28th, the films were *Children's Charter*, on the New Education Act, *Happy Childhood*, on children's welfare, *Labour Front* and *Winterset*. The Manchester and Salford Film Forum announces that there are still vacancies for membership at six shillings per annum. Application should be made to the Secretary, Miss D. Buxton, 183 Dane Road, Sale.

The first performance of **The London Scientific Film Society** was given at the Scala Theatre, Charlotte Street, London, W.1, on Sunday, December 9th; the programme consisted of *Put Yourself in His Shoes*, *Your Children's Eyes*, *Handling Ships*, *The Story of D.D.T.*, and *Tennessee Valley Authority*. The second show was held on January 20th at the Scala at 2.45 p.m., and included a memorial programme of the work of the late Percy Smith.

The Kingston and District Film Society (Secretary, H. Wells, 155 Hamilton Avenue, Tolworth, Surrey) was started in September, 1945, due to the efforts of two scientific workers and two film technicians. It has been impossible to get permission to use a cinema or a good hall, but audiences limited to 120 have shown great enthusiasm for 16 mm. showings of *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *The Italian Straw Hat*, *Potemkin* and *The White Hell of Pitz Palu*. The last two were accompanied by special synchronised musical scores on discs devised by Mr. Stuart Keen. A show of scientific films and a large children's show have also been successfully organised by the Society. The second half of the season will include *The Edge of the World*, *The Blue Angel*, *The Covered Wagon*, *Film and Reality*, *Mor Vran*, *Children of the City* and *West Riding*.

The Harrow Technical School is organising a course of twelve lectures on film production, starting on January 14th. Speakers will include Paul Rotha, Cavalcanti, Jack Cardiff, the ace technicolor cameraman, William Alwyn and William Farr. The course costs £1. Applications to attend should be made to J. G. Platt, Harrow Technical School, Station Road, Harrow-on-the-Hill.

Beginning in the New Year, **The Scientific Film Association** will book films for member Scientific Film Societies. *The Canadian National Film Board* has presented copies of two 16 mm. nature films in colour to the S.F.A. for the exclusive use of its member societies.

The Central Film Library has found the original negative of *Drifters*. Copies will presently be available.

The New London Film Society screened *Intolerance* on December 17th. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was screened on January 6th.

The Slough Scientific Film Society held a gala show at Aspro Hall on December 14th, to raise funds. About £60 was collected.

The Cheltenham Film Society. The Society came into being at a public meeting held at the School of Art, Cheltenham, in April, 1945. The committee set up on that occasion worked for six months before overcoming the various obstacles which confronted it.

In December the committee booked the Coliseum Cinema for Sunday evening shows (one a month) and sub-standard screenings at the School of Art (two a month). During its short history it has presented five standard shows and over twenty sub-standard screenings.

The programme for the next four months consists of: *A Night at the Opera*, *Un Carnet de Bal*, *Grapes of Wrath*, *Le Dernier Milliardaire* (35 mm.); *Battleship Potemkin*, *The Lady Vanishes*, *Film and Reality*, *The Stars Look Down*, *Man of Aran*, *The Blue Angel*, *Spanish Earth*, and *The 49th Parallel* (16 mm.). The Society is affiliated to the British Film Institute and the Cheltenham Cultural Council. The membership now stands at 640. Enquiries are welcome, and should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, C.F.S., School of Art, St. Margaret's Road, Cheltenham (Tel. 4639).

The Everyman Film Society. The Everyman Film Society was formed in October, 1945, to give people the chance to learn how films are made, to make them themselves, and, in this way, to adopt a more appreciative and critical attitude towards films in general. At its very successful first meeting the Hon. Anthony Asquith gave the audience an analytical survey of the development of film technique.

Animation in film was the subject of another very interesting talk, which was given by Mr. Francis Rodker, of Shell Film Unit, and further talks have been arranged for the rest of the season. Film shows too form part of the programme. *The Blue Angel* and *N. or N.W.* were received with great enthusiasm, and afterwards discussed over glasses of beer. The members of

(*continued on next page*)

Audience Research (*continued from page 7*)

"I have once or twice read the first few paragraphs of books on, I think they are called, Aerodynamics, but I've never fathomed anything out. After seeing this film I believe I know the fundamentals of the subject". A few, as might be expected, were negative: "The film would be of more interest in natural colour."

With all these considerations in mind, how far did we achieve the objects which prompted the test? As a "try-out" of a new film, it was interesting and valuable, because any direct contact with an audience is valuable to a film-maker; but it did not do more than confirm the need of certain adjustments in timing (the majority found the film on the slow side) which would, anyway, have been the natural outcome of a finalising stage in production. On the other hand, it did suggest that, if an enquiry were carried out on a wider basis over a longer period, instead of being rushed in at the tail-end of a production period, much worth-while information might emerge.

There is no doubt that some such direct contact with audiences is of increasing importance as educational films tend more and more to be made for showing to selected groups of people. It is apparent, however, as a consequence of this test, that the only approach likely to yield really useful results is to enlist the help of a number of audience groups in their own environment (schools, colleges, training establishments, etc.), so allowing an elaboration of the questionnaire and the carrying out of subsequent tests with the same audiences after suitable intervals. This would avoid the artificial atmosphere of the pre-view theatre or public cinema, which tends to produce, either an unusual (and therefore quite unreal) degree of concentration, or an attitude of frivolity.

This suggestion, of course, implies the use of completed films; for unfinished films, having sound and picture on separate lengths of film, cannot be run together on an ordinary projector —as they can on most pre-view theatre apparatus. This has not the disadvantages that appear at first sight. It is becoming the practice today to produce educational films in related series, from which it would be possible to select various typical series for testing in the place of single films. Although, in this case, the results of the test would lag, as it were, one film behind, the information could be available to the producers in time to influence the final shaping of each succeeding film in that series; and, also, be generally available as guidance in the undertaking of films of a similar nature. The work of preparing the questionnaires and summarising the results would be immense, but, on such a scale, it could be sponsored by a group of units, or interested bodies, and carried out by audience reaction specialists.

Useful surveys have, no doubt, been launched at various times in this country, but it is rarely that any hint of the findings have reached those making the films. A scheme sponsored by the makers themselves would ensure the results being available for all.

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,

May I comment on the letter in the 50th issue of D.N.L. under the heading "Cry from the Colonies"?

The facts are these:

British News is edited by each of the Newsreel Companies in turn from items selected from their own make-ups by a small Committee.

If it is badly edited it is because the Newsreels themselves are badly edited.

Since I have been with the Council, I have seen all the issues and selected the items with the Committee. In my view—and I have been closely connected with the film presentation of news for six years—the issues of the last three months have been interesting and well knit together, and have presented the news from a British viewpoint.

Your correspondent is ill-informed when he complains of the "dreary slow nonsense" comparing it unfavourably with the ordinary British newsreel with a different title.

In the matter of title he is right. The main title is 51 feet in length (not 100 as your correspondent writes) and is indeed slow and ponderous, being accompanied by a somewhat unsuitable piece of music (in my view)—although it was written by an eminent composer of film music.

Almost the first thing I decided on arrival was to have a new and more suitable title made. But this waits until the future of *British News*, now rather uncertain, is decided.

The Newsreel Companies are anxious for us to stop it, and we don't wish to continue a day longer than is necessary.

But until the commercial reels can reach the Colonial Empire with the space of time now taken by British News to do so, the places concerned rely on this reel for their only source of British film news.

Your correspondent does not feel that *British News* is wanted. I can show you many letters and reports warmly supporting *British News* and asking for its continued distribution.

Director, Film Department, R. E. TRITTON
The British Council.

British News is circulated to the following countries: *Bahamas, British Honduras, Falkland Islands, Fiji, Gibraltar, Gold Coast, Leeward Islands, Mauritius, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Tonga Islands, Uganda, Windward Islands, Zanzibar, U.S.S.R., Bermuda, Ceylon, Kenya, Nigeria, Aden, Barbados, British Guiana, Cyprus, Malta, Northern Rhodesia, Sierra Leone, Jamaica, St. Helena, Trinidad, Eire, Gambia, Panama, Seychelles, Southern Rhodesia, Spain, Palestine, South Africa, British Somaliland, East African Command (Kenya), Kenya Mobile Propaganda Unit, East African Forces in Ceylon, West African Forces in Middle East, East African Forces in Middle East.*

SIR,

In your last issue you published a letter from Mr. Brian Smith in which he made several criticisms of the Graded List of Films issued by the Scientific Films Committee of the Association of Scientific Workers. In view of the fact that most of the criticisms made are based on misconceptions, we feel that some reply is needed. We should like to deal with the points in the order in which they were raised.

The Committee considered that withdrawn films should be included, since many of the withdrawals were temporary war-time measures on the part of some distributors.

The gradings given to each film are certainly not "*personal*" opinions but are the recommendations of a panel consisting of qualified scientists, film technicians, and others. The appraisals have been carried out over a period of seven years starting in 1938, and during this period the composition of the Viewing Panel has inevitably changed, and at the same time their terms of reference have been modified in the light of experience gained. Obviously, under these conditions no absolute standard of criticism can be guaranteed and this may explain some gradings which Mr. Smith regards as "most extraordinary". The reference numbers in the list were issued chronologically and serve, therefore, to indicate the date of appraisal. Details of date of appraisal and the composition of the Viewing Panel for each film are filed at Head Office.

Mr. Smith writes: "What is more serious, however, is the whole host of films which find no mention in the catalogue. We must assume that they have been relegated to Grade 3, 'not recommended for any audience type'." This, of course, is quite wrong. If he had read the preface he would have seen it stated that "we wish to emphasise that no films are included . . . until they have been viewed by the Committee and other qualified scientists. The list is therefore not yet a complete record of all scientific films. . . ." There are indeed many films still to be viewed and supplements to the list are continually being issued. Many of the agricultural films mentioned by your correspondent have now been appraised and are included in a supplement which has just been issued. In a few months the list will be reprinted. The present list was recently made by amalgamating the original list and all subsequent supplements. Some inaccuracies have crept in, and in addition in our haste to issue the list to our branches in time for the winter season, many annoying typographical errors have passed uncorrected; for these we must apologise. It would be more helpful if users instead of rushing hastily into print, would inform the Committee of the inaccuracies they come across. For this we would be grateful.

Hon. Secretary, DEREK STEWART
Scientific Films Committee.

Film Societies (*continued from previous page*)

the Society are, with some exceptions, people who know little or nothing about film-making. Their enthusiasm for the talks, the film show, and for the shooting (on 16 mm. stock), which will take place later in the season, is more than sufficient evidence for the necessity for such a society. Unfortunately membership has to be limited, as only a small society could efficiently and fairly divide the work, and pleasure, of film-making among its members.

SHENVAL PRESS, LONDON AND HERTFORD

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MARCH–APRIL

CONTENTS

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FILMS IN SCHOOL

SINCE the New Year nearly every educational association in the country has gone on record with its views on how, and by whom, teaching films ought to be produced and distributed. Representatives of the Association of Education Committees, the County Councils Association, the National Union of Teachers, the Joint Committee of the Four Secondary Associations and the Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions have subscribed to a MEMORANDUM ON THE PRODUCTION OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS which has been submitted to the Minister of Education with a request that she shall convene a conference of all interested bodies to discuss its recommendations.[1] (This document is described below as the "5-group memorandum".)

Twenty-five other educational bodies attended a meeting held on February 23rd under the chairmanship of Dr. G. B. Jeffery, Director of the University of London Institute of Education, to consider a statement prepared by the Scientific Film Association, the Science Masters' Association, and the Association of Women Science Teachers. After listening to the views of the Visual Education Centre, Exeter, and the British Film Institute, the meeting subscribed to a memorandum headed, THE SUPPLY, DISTRIBUTION AND APPRAISAL OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS AND RELATED MATERIAL, which was also forwarded to the Minister of Education.[2] (This document is described below as the "25-group memorandum".)

Though these two documents differ in some respects, they are in agreement on basic principles. It is now clear that every educational association in the country supports the national sponsorship of educational films and recognises that their circulation must be taken out of the realm of commercial speculation. (A few educational bodies still seem to believe that, ideally, educational films ought to be made and issued like school text-books, but even the warmest supporter of the text-book theory admits that it can only be realised, if ever, in the distant future.) These views are also endorsed by the Arts Enquiry, whose chapter on educational films is reproduced by P.E.P. in a recent broadsheet,[3] and by nearly every documentary unit of standing in the country.

Agreement goes deeper than mere subscription to principle. Both the documents we have mentioned, as well as the Arts Enquiry, propose a central authority, appointed mainly or wholly by the educational world, to control film production and distribution policy. In each case, it is stressed that this authority must be independent of the Ministry of Education in status and outlook. It must reflect the views of the teaching profession and not of the Ministry. The 5-group memorandum calls for a National Committee for Educational Films which will be "largely representative of the local education authorities and the teachers". This committee, with "assessors from the Ministry", would plan education policy and arrange for films to be commissioned through the films division of the C.O.I. For each film, "one or more educational advisers" would be appointed. The 25-group memorandum calls for an Advisory Council for Visual Education, "the membership of which should be determined after consultation with the educational organisations and subject associations, and which shall include a substantial proportion of practising teachers, as well as other members appointed for their expert knowledge". This council "would correlate information and experience, initiate research, and advise the Ministry as to programmes of work to be undertaken". The Arts Enquiry calls for a Visual Education Council which shall draw up, in consultation with the films division of C.O.I., an annual programme of educational film production. This Council would also appoint teaching and subject experts to work with the producers. It would consist of "practising teachers, both in schools and universities, school inspectors, and educational administrators". Its members would be selected "for their knowledge and experience of the use of visual aids and for their standing in the teaching profession". They would not be appointed as representatives of organisations. Two of the three documents explicitly bar the British Film Institute from being the Committee or Council in question, or even from being associated with it except incidentally.

The constitution of the proposed Visual Education Committee or Council is of first importance, for it will determine whether we are to have a lively, dynamic policy in visual matters or a pedestrian, bureaucratic one. If the former, the Committee must consist of members appointed for their personal qualities and not because they reflect the policy or politics of some parent organisation. The Committee must be able to stand on its own feet. It must make its decisions without thought of special interests whether these derive from the educational or the film world. (To avoid the danger that such a Committee might develop along lines which are not in the best interests of education, it might be wise to lay down that it shall make a report of its stewardship each year to a representative body of teachers—a kind of teachers' parliament.)

The 25-group memorandum and the Arts Enquiry both underline the point that the new Committee must be expert, and not merely a collection of delegates, but the 5-group memorandum would make the new Committee "largely representative of the local education authorities and the teachers". Whether this means that the members of the Committee must be representative of these interests and report back to them, or whether it means merely that the members

should be drawn from these sources in the first place, is uncertain. Perhaps those responsible for drafting this part of the memorandum could not agree among themselves and therefore made it ambiguous deliberately. Whatever the precise meaning of the phrase, we hope that everyone concerned will press for a Committee, expert in its own right and above the battle of competing special interests.

There is a fair measure of agreement on matters of distribution as well as of production. All groups consider that there ought to be local film libraries, backed up by a Central Film Library. All groups require that the distribution of films to schools should be free, though this point is made implicitly and not explicitly in the 5-group memorandum. The latter also proposes that the local libraries shall purchase prints from the central agency at a price calculated ultimately to make the production programme pay for itself. The 25-group memorandum would make the films available to the local libraries free of charge, and the Arts Enquiry dismisses the question without coming to a conclusion. Most of the documentary producing units consider that all distribution should be free.

For our part, we believe that experience will show that it is not only undesirable to charge for the supply of prints to local libraries but also very difficult. Large numbers of films used in schools (though not specifically designed for them) are already available, without charge, from the Central Film Library and other sources, and this practice is certain to continue. A service of films, some of which carry a charge and some of which do not, will be almost unmanageable. There would also be an objectionable tendency for the poorer local film libraries to base their orders for printing less on an objective study of local requirements than on a choice partly influenced by what they could get for nothing. In any case, whatever is done will have to be paid for out of the public purse. According to the 5-group memorandum the money would come partly from the rates and partly from grants-in-aid; the 25-group memorandum would place the charges for the supply of films squarely on the public exchequer, with the application of all the safeguards that such a process requires.

Two points are overlooked in the 5-group memorandum, which generally takes rather a narrower view of the various problems than the other groups. It will be essential for the local film libraries to service all classes of user, an independent national system of objective appraisal must be developed as a guide and corrective, not only to the new Committee but to the producers. In the first case, since the film has now become an integral part of our cultural life, it will be not only inefficient, but anti-social, if local film libraries do not provide a service to adult education groups and universities, film societies and cultural organisations of all kinds. whether the come under the local authority or not. If necessary this wider servi must be financed by grants from the Ministry of Educatio Secondly, the objective appraisal of films is fundamental to ar scheme of educational film production. Evidence must be collecte to guide producers to conceive their films in terms which will mak each of the greatest possible use in its particular age group. Eac film must not only be appraised by teachers, but also studied in th class-room. Finally, the new Committee must compile and issue catalogue in which *all* the available films in the country are listed, n matter what their source, with synopses, appraisals (made by som independent body) and notes on the audience ranges for whic they appear to be suited.

From a close consideration of all the memoranda it is clear tha differences of opinion between the various groups are relativel negligible in comparison with points of agreement. This remarkabl unanimity has been reached because all teachers in Britain have de cided that they, and no one else, shall command the film in educa tion. Indeed, so firm is the general determination in this matter tha it is difficult to see how the backward influences which are know still to lurk in some of the higher reaches of the Ministry of Educa tion can much longer impede the national will.

NOTES

[1] Reproduced in *Education* for February 22nd, 1946 (Vol LXXXVII No. 2250).

[2] Reproduced in *The Times Educational Supplement* for March 2nd 1946 (No. 1609). Besides those groups responsible for drafting the origina statement, the following subscribed to the memorandum in question:— Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Educatio Association of University Teachers; Association of Assistant Mistresses British Association of Commercial and Industrial Education; Cardi Education Committee; Classical Association; Educational Handwor Association; English New Education Fellowship; Film Council of th South-West; Historical Association; Incorporated Association of Assistan Masters; Incorporated Association of Headmistresses; Incorporate Association of Headmasters; Ling Physical Education Association Mathematical Association; National Association of Girls and Mixe Clubs; National Association of Schoolmasters; National Union o Women Teachers; National Association of Head Teachers; Schoo Nature Study Union; London Schools Film Society.

[3] *The Film in Schools.* (No. 245 of the P.E.P. Broadsheet, "Planning" issued on February 15, 1946.) The Arts Enquiry was established in 194 to study the organisation of the visual arts. It has been sponsored by th Dartington Hall Trustees in association with the Nuffield College Socia Reconstruction Survey.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

More Two-way Traffic

IN response to our complaint in the last issue that no proper efforts are being made to arrange the reciprocal circulation in Britain of film from overseas, Mr. R. E. Tritton, Director of the Film Department of the British Council, writes to correct what he feels is a misstatement of fact:—

"You say that so far as you know, neither the M.O.I. nor the British Council has done anything to encourage this two-way traffic. I can't help feeling that before your writer made that remark he might, perhaps, have rung up the British Council to ask what they were doing, rather than he should assume that they were doing nothing.

"As regards France, when M. de Fonbrune visited London in January:

(1) Communications Department of the Council, at very short notice, made arrangements with Customs and Excise for his films and equipment to be brought in;
(2) Science and Medical Departments assembled, at very shor notice, a gathering of scientists and scientific film people
(3) A very successful showing of his film was made under th British Council auspices.

"Again, we are at the moment making arrangements for som of Dr. Comandon's films to be brought to London and show under the British Council auspices. Yet again, we are at th moment making arrangements for a number of Danish film which Arthur Elton has brought to the country to be shown bot to the press and to various interested people in this country."

We are delighted to receive this evidence that the Council i taking this reciprocity question seriously. But it is still a matter fo regret that there is no department of the Council or the C.O.I wholly devoted to the handling of cultural films from overseas which would not only deal with films once they have arrived, bu which would seek out suitable films and import them.

IN THE MINDS OF MEN

By Sinclair Road, Secretary of the Federation of Documentary Film Units

"SINCE WARS begin in the minds of men it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." The constitution of UNESCO begins with these words. It was adopted in November, 1945, after a three-week conference in London attended by delegates from forty-three countries. Russia was not represented, but one of the fifteen seats on the new organisation's council has been left vacant. UNESCO is one of the "specialised agencies", like the FAO, UNRRA and ILO, which the United Nations intend to bring within the framework of the Economic and Social Council "to promote solutions of international, economic, social and related problems, and international cultural and educational co-operation", as laid down in the San Francisco Charter. Like these other agencies UNESCO was established to meet an urgent need. The educational resources of Europe and the Far East have been shattered; schools, teachers and materials gone. It was one of the main functions of the Conference of Allied Ministers of Education which met in London in 1942 to consider what help could be given in the rebuilding of the educational systems of Europe. It was this body which prepared the original draft proposals for an educational and cultural organisation; and it was on its behalf that the British Government called the conference in London. But it is more than short-term needs that are in question, and UNESCO's terms of reference have been widely drawn. "To contribute to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations through education, science and culture", may seem a grandiloquent phrase, but at least the stresses are right, however obvious the strains may be.

It is interesting to compare the origin and constitution of UNESCO and those of similar League of Nations bodies. Not only different circumstances, but also different ideas were at work in the two cases. Intellectual questions were not incorporated in the Covenant of the League after the 1914–18 War, as they are in the San Francisco Charter. The need for a committee to encourage "intellectual co-operation" as it was termed so pontifically, was not raised on the League of Nations Council until 1921. Subsequently, a committee was established, an intellectual co-operation organisation, various expert committees, forty-four national committees and two executive bodies, one at Geneva and an Institute in Paris. Films, however, were not the specific concern of any of these bodies. But in the meantime the Italian Government had on its own initiative set up an International Institute of Educational Cinematography which was recognised as an organ of the League in 1928. This body tried to develop the educational uses of the film in each country, among other things negotiating a convention for the duty free exchange of educational films in 1933. But it was too much under the thumb of the Italian Government; it did not achieve any real standing and came to an abrupt and unlamented end when Italy left the League in 1937.

This inter-war "intellectual co-operation" had certain marked characteristics. It was fostered by several bodies, but all of them were restricted to intellectual questions outside the range of teaching, an important limitation. In their work they tended to concentrate on the exchange of specialist information among experts. Some of it was valuable work but limited in effect. Attempts at reaching a wider world public usually took the form of trying to popularise the idea of international relations rather than the actual work of men's minds. Mass media like the film were not employed as an integral part of the work of exchanging information; the attention paid to them seemed more of an afterthought.

This bit of history is important in understanding the way in which the new body has been set up. In the first place UNESCO has been constituted to deal in all intellectual matters: it is not excluded from education. Secondly, and this point was stressed repeatedly at the London conference, it is to be the means of encouraging "the *common* understanding of the peoples of the world", not merely understanding between experts. Finally, the use of such media of mass communication as the Press, the radio and the film, has been recognised as an essential part of this work.

Given the recognition accorded to the film as one of the essential media of exchange, an immediate problem is, how can UNESCO set about developing its use on the widest possible scale? Should it aim to set up a film department with its own production unit, library and distribution service, or should it occupy the role of an initiating and co-ordinating body relying on the production and distribution services that exist in each country? Secondly, should it be concerned only with the non-theatrical use of films, or should it include cinema distribution in its plans? These questions are of particular relevance at the moment; as the Preparatory Commission of UNESCO established by the November Conference is now considering the whole question of organisation, with a special sub-committee dealing with mass media. Proposals have been submitted by various bodies including a committee representing Government departments and film organisations called together under the auspices of the BFI, and by the Federation of Documentary Film Units. It appears to be generally agreed that the creation of a central production unit within UNESCO would be inadvisable at this stage, particularly in view of the present shortage of trained technicians and equipment. There are in existence in a number of countries experienced documentary units through which UNESCO could sponsor films. In sponsoring films UNESCO would require the services of an advisory council and a director with wide first-hand experience of the production and use of documentary and educational films. Various technicians may also be necessary, but primarily UNESCO should aim to get the maximum out of existing services. On the question of a library of films there is greater room for divergence of opinion. But here, too, it would appear more practical, instead of trying to build up a collection of all existing documentary and educational films, which would make great demands in terms of staff and accommodation, for UNESCO to operate an international booking agency through which one country could book films held by libraries in other countries. In this case UNESCO should only hold copies of films which it had itself sponsored. On the question of distribution it would seem sensible if UNESCO restricted its activities to the non-theatrical field. There is an evident risk of UNESCO overlapping with UNO, which is also intending to set up a film section within its Department of Public Information. If UNO's information department is concerned with publicising UNO activities on the widest possible scale, let its film section aim at the cinema audiences of the world using all the theatrical channels which are open, newsreels, news films like "March of Time" and "World in Action" and suitable documentaries to secure the necessary coverage. UNESCO could then get on with the work which its title, constitution and the many urgent needs of the day require. It is a platitude to say that this work will require considerable energy and enterprise, but it is an encouraging sign that such media of communication as the film are to be widely employed. The recent appointment of Dr. Julian Huxley, F.R.S., as Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission, is a good start. He has wide interests outside his own subject and a clear understanding of the social relevancies of science and the arts and of the part which the film, the radio and the Press play in shaping the minds of men.

SLOW BUT NOT SO SURE

G. S. Bagley, of the National Film Board of Canada, looks at visual aids

WHEN I ARRIVED in England two months ago I was not particularly orientated towards visual education. We had done a little at the N.F.B. for the armed forces, but had not specialised in it. My behaviour during the first few weeks of my visit must have been quite a creditable imitation of a bloodhound, circling around prior to pulling strongly away on an interesting scent. The interesting scent for me proved to lead into the visual education field and I soon decided that "visual aids" was a depressing label to hang around the neck of such an interesting animal. I also found quickly that there was argument and disagreement in the field. For instance, in using the term "visual aids" I am already upon dangerous ground, for there is apparently a great gulf between the happy-go-lucky visual aider and the profound visual educationalist absorbed in V.E. psychology. Now this academic argument is rather ludicrous: are we to suppose that the latter earnest gentlemen conceive education as being entirely visual? If they do not then all illustrative material must be classed as an "aid".

I'm not a teacher. Neither am I a film man in the sense of film making. But I am an educationalist, for all who have practised in the graphic arts find themselves willy-nilly in that class. I find that quite a lot has been written about visual education and to be candid I think that it is rather on the dull side. Why?

The subject is far from dull, it's exciting. Graphic forms are going to brighten up the curriculum. Buildings are taking on new shapes, their insides will be much more pleasant, the new visual education material—with its attendant colour—is going to delight the eye, I hope. But the existing visual aids do not delight me at the moment. They remind one of a shopping expedition in a badly bombed town. You travel all over the lot and then find that the greengrocer is about sixteen blocks to the north, and it's getting darker every minute. In the National Film Board we do not like darkness or even dimness, so we decided to have a light. The co-ordinating art director came into action.

I mention this because there is one word—co-ordinating—which is frequently found to be missing when studying the visual education field. Without co-ordinated media, each doing a specific job, there can be no such thing as visual education. There is nothing very difficult about it if we know the meaning of the word. The Oxford defines co-ordination as *equal in status*. The following co-ordinated media are essential to a good visual education plan:

Booklets and leaflets.
Charts, diagrams and maps.
Displays.
Epidiascope material.
Films, sound, silent and strip.
Models.
Newspapers (wall).
Teaching Notes.

Simple, isn't it? Yet how many people are planning this way?

The film, of course, occupies a prominent position in our daily lives, in fact the film and the newspaper probably educate (don't forget that education is a broad subject) more men, women, *and children* than any other media. Yet I'm told that there are very few films, that teachers wish to use. I'm sure that, as the technique of film-making is so competent, this slight *impasse* will be solved by the agreement between the film makers and the teachers on the requirements of the film as a unit in the visual education field. The fact remains that there are films in use in the schools, quite a number of them.

How about the film strip? Well, it's not really in being yet. Here is a lovely handy medium, cheapish, easy to make, and as portable as hell. But it must not be thought of as a poor relation of the movie. It should be a film in itself, carefully planned, and the research, especially for the pictorial matter, painstaking. The illustrative material is very important for here is a method of bringing good graphic art before the children. (A fine 18th-century copperplate looks magnificent when blown up to six feet wide.) There is one more point about film strips that I'd like to mention: some people are thinking of them in terms of clipping up, re-arranging, using in sections or even individual frames. This is not the function of the film strip. It must be constructed to tell a definite story and tell it in a definite sequence. Don't above all let the film strip be a light-weight substitute for a set of slides.

In the list of media I have deliberately used the term "display" because I want to get the emphasis off "exhibition" which conjures up visions of vistas and vastness. Visual education needs the simple, the portable, the flexible. Such displays can be anything from the one-shot improvised paste-up to the multiple photographic silk-screen, or collotype job. In function it may be a leader-up, a finale, or a recapitulation of the whole subject. It may be so designed that it can be retained from year to year or have its component parts detachable and capable of re-arrangement; it can be flat, three-dimensional, and use true or distorted perspective. Displays are probably the most flexible of our media and enough to excite all but the most phlegmatic cerebration. Models come within the display section and should be used frequently. I would hazard a guess that the model has the greatest attraction and memory impressing value of any form of visual aid. Finally simplicity is the vital point to remember when planning displays as visual aids. The flat panel series idea, which has been well used by CEMA, is probably the best basis. The occasional application of a three-dimensional item to one of the panels will give a lift to the series when seen as a whole. One crumb of comfort for the local authority milch cow; expensive lighting gadgets need not be used at all in visual education display work.

If any of my friends in Canada read this article they will probably wonder why I've made no mention, before this, of my particular baby, the printed art. I have a particular reason. Here it is: the tremendous importance of that prime of the printing art—typography. It is no use commissioning and obtaining lovely drawings, paintings, photographs, charts and what you will, unless we have first-class typography and lettering either to complete or to make a w designed unit. These considerations app equally to *all* our media, *not* only to print work. One of the truisms of our day and work the small number of citizens who do typograph and layout as it should be done, and here I ha a suggestion to make to your people in Britai and to Canadians who come here.

Go to a country churchyard and see wh 18th-century country bumpkins left for us to s on their tombstones. Was there ever a tit frame or chart to equal the sheer beauty ar legibility that records the passing of bumpkin ever-loving wife?

As I say, go to such a churchyard—preferab on rising ground—and visualise. See the flowin stone of the decorated, the spacing (very impor ant) of things in general. Look around—you a on rising ground—at the panorama of eart trees, stone, and life. You are now experiencin visual education by means of visual aids. Is dull? Is it dead?

Of course it is not. The story of the land, th people, the past and the present have com alive. It whets the appetite—solid and liquid- so go down to the pub by the hopfield side an scuddy mill stream. Brewing and milling, do story on each, local studies, interweaving suitabl social and economic justification.

Have I made this visual education matte sound exciting? I hope so. We must approac such a job with enthusiasm, for enthusiasm breeds daring and banishes dullness. Childre and all things young do not suffer dullnes gladly. Neither do the young in mind. Delive us from a surfeit of discussion. Do not let u have to learn a new alphabet or subscribe to th patenting of monotony.

Let us get right on and do things. Get them o celluloid, paper, board, acetate, wood, and th hundred and one materials that we can get b going round the corner, with an official orde firmly grasped in our mitts. If we feel we ar getting dull let us go and bounce a ball or rea a whodunit. Last week I felt far from scintillatin so I picked up a thriller by Michael Innes. read: "I mind Rob Yule asking once: 'An what is Visual Education?' and before the woma could reply Will Saunders cutting in sharp 'It's what Susannah afforded the elders'. A daft speak, and black affronted the school mistress."

Well, I don't know all about the elders, an I'm sure none of us want to affront any school marms; but the film makers and the artists an designers will have to pull their weight in th councils which will decide the future of visua education. We, the film makers and designers know how to present a visually acceptable item We know how to plan it, how to shoot and other wise graphically portray it—and that is mor than half the battle. If it is decided that visua education is the order of the day then the officia educationists must accept the guidance o trained practitioners in the visual arts. Fo remember that aids to Visual Education must b acceptable—nay, more than that, they must be capable of attracting and holding the attentio with or without the aid of oral embellishment

THE SUPPLY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS

This article, by Dorothy Grayson, was written before the various educational associations had declared in favour of an educational film system approximating to what she calls below "Commissioned Production with Organised Distribution". Her detailed suggestions under this head go some way to answering "The Times Educational Supplement's" complaint in its issue of March 2nd that the memorandum issued after the conference of twenty-five educational associations on February 23rd offered no positive suggestions on the relationship between the film expert, the educational expert and the subject expert.

THERE are already a number of free films sponsored by Government Departments and by large commercial associations which, though in most cases not designed for the purpose, are useful in schools. It is hoped that the Ministry of Education may shortly allocate funds to encourage the provision of films and visual units specially designed for school use, and this is a matter which is obviously of great interest to teachers. Various schemes have been put forward in view of this possibility. They fall into two main groups which may be called (I) *The Guarantee against Loss*, and (II) *Commissioned Production with Organised Distribution.*

(I) The Guarantee against Loss

Under this scheme public money is to be used to encourage speculative commercial enterprise. This, it is believed, will discourage extravagance, waste and State domination of the content of education as a result of direct official provision of class-room material. It has been suggested that the Ministry of Education should provide funds to guarantee against loss any producer working on an approved treatment of any subject from a list to be prepared in consultation with teachers. The producer would retain copyright in the production and arrange distribution on a normal commercial basis. This seems unlikely to result in any immediate reduction in prices or simplification of distribution. At present there are nearly 200 libraries, some free, some charging up to 5/- per day per 10-minute reel. Teachers would no doubt be consulted during production, but any organised use of the best teaching experience would appear to be unlikely under such a system. The method described would, however, stimulate supply and help towards meeting educational needs.

(II) Commissioned Production with Organised Distribution

Those who support this scheme believe that more direct official action is essential to secure the necessary co-operation of the teaching profession, to reduce costs and to establish a unified and convenient system of distribution. They believe that efficient safeguards against extravagance, and against rigidity in the content and method of education can be devised. It is suggested that:—

(1) the Ministry of Education should institute a small Council of distinguished educationalists to act as the Governing Body of a permanent Department;

(2) the Department should be staffed by experienced teachers who, with secretarial help and in consultation with teachers' organisations, would—

(*a*) draw up a yearly programme of films and visual units recommended for production, with the names of practising teachers who would be competent to advise on each;

(*b*) draw up a list of recommended British and foreign films, both amateur and professional, to be acquired for educational use;

(*c*) publish a cumulative loose-leaf descriptive catalogue of films, each supported by an appraisal based on reports from a network of teachers viewing groups;

(*d*) publish a journal;

(*e*) advise on projection arrangements, equipment and visual material;

(*f*) encourage, co-ordinate and make known the results of research, and make recommendations for grants for such work;

(*g*) recommend for grants teacher-producers of films and other visual material whose work merits encouragement.

(3) The approved programme of films should be commissioned by the Ministry of Education through the films division of the M.O.I. or whatever organisation is to take its place. Thus, while perhaps 5 per cent of the output would be the work of the Government Crown Film Unit, most of it would be done by various independent companies, and stereotyped official production would be avoided. It is important that originality and independent initiative and experiment should be encouraged in both professional and amateur production, and part of the allocation of the funds should be reserved both for the purchase of non-commissioned productions, and to help amateur production.

(4) Copyright of commissioned production would be the property of the Ministry of Education and there would therefore be no difficulty in using any of the material in other contexts. Copies of the material could be available to L.E.A.s and schools at the bare cost of printing and handling.

(5) A Central Distributing Organisation, a development of the official Central Film Library already in existence, should handle distribution to school and L.E.A. libraries, and to any Regional film offices which may be set up to hold reserves of films not in constant use by schools, and to carry on and extend the work of the present M.O.I. regional films officers. The Central Distribution Organisation would also act as a reservoir to meet large local demands for a particular film or other visual item, and to hold material which is likely to be used sporadically or infrequently.

(6) A condition of supply to L.E.A.s and to regional libraries, either free of charge or at prices based on printing costs should be their undertaking to allow all recognised schools, youth organisations and adult groups in their area to borrow the material free of charge, providing that they have the services of a competent projectionist.

(7) L.E.A. and Regional Film Offices should arrange to service projectors in their area, and to provide proper inspection and repair of the material in their libraries. They should provide for instruction in projection and elementary maintenance, and give facilities for the previewing of films.

(8) The system of provision and distribution of films and visual units should not be such as to preclude the ultimate provision of a comprehensive and unified service of educational visual material of all types. Regional film offices and L.E.A. libraries should work in collaboration with training colleges and University education departments, and particularly with any college in the area, which, as suggested in the McNair report, is specially responsible for the development of work on visual methods. They should work with public museums and libraries, and with the civic and children's cinemas which progressive local councils may be expected to provide. In town-planning schemes it may be possible to co-ordinate many of these in a visual centre.

Democratic Safeguards

Official planning and distribution of films and visual matter should not lead to the rigidity of imposed syllabuses and methods or to any curtailment in educational freedom, but should provide an educational service to stimulate and enrich the work of the schools and youth organisations and of the community in general. The Board of Education was always scrupulous in emphasising its advisory function, and there is no reason to believe that the Ministry, despite its wider powers, would wish to depart from this enlightened and democratic attitude. But any centralisation has its dangers and certain safeguards against undesirable developments should be incorporated in the scheme which has been outlined. Thus:—

(*i*) The permanent Department would not be a part of the Ministry, and would be responsible, through the Governing Council, to the Body providing its finance. This may be the Ministry, or it may preferably be the Ministry and L.E.A.s jointly. Separation from the Ministry seems desirable as being likely to facilitate a free flow of independent suggestions and criticism from teachers, and to reduce any suggestion of official pressure to work on the lines developed in officially commissioned material.

(*ii*) The final appraisal of commissioned material should be based on the judgment of a very wide cross-section of the profession, by setting up a network of representative groups of educationalists. Such appraisals would provide guidance on the matter and treatment to be incorporated in future annual programmes for production.

(*iii*) As a further check against any possible tendency, remote as it now seems, to impose a rigid pattern on the educational system, it may be desirable to require the permanent Department to submit a detailed annual report on its work to the teachers' organisations, or to a large committee of their representatives.

(*iv*) Production costing of Government films would provide a yardstick to detect any extravagance in production costs.

(*Continued on page* 23)

FILMS IN AUSTRALIA

By Harry Watt, who has recently directed a story documentary in Australia

AUSTRALIA is a very film conscious country. It has always had a desire to make films about itself and in point of fact, more than sixty films have been made. Unfortunately very few of these have been of any worth. The reason for this is mainly that they have been made by well-intentioned but unskilled locals, and the culture and technical abilities necessary for the making of films was lacking. Another and perhaps more important reason for the failure, was a slavish desire to imitate the films of English and American type. Very seldom did they realise that the only way to create a national cinema was to create national feeling and atmosphere in their films.

At present there are only two film makers of any standing in Australia. One is Ken Hall, the head of Cinesound Studios which, in addition to its production work, produces a weekly newsreel. Ken Hall has produced and directed about twenty features of all kinds. His biggest commercial successes, the "Dad and Dave" series, were slap-stick comedies about primitive out-back types, who are the equivalent of the American hill-billies. Many of these films are very funny, and have had considerable success in Australia and the provinces of England. They are disliked by the more intelligent Australian as misrepresenting their out-back folk, who are in fact the backbone of the country. Despite this, Ken Hall is a sincere and hard-working film maker. He is at present engaged on a film depicting the life of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. This film is financed by Columbia, and is the first which American capital has made in Australia.

The other film maker in Australia is Charles Chauvel. He has been struggling for many years on independent finance, and he has tried hard to put some of Australia's history and greatness on the screen. Unfortunately his scripts have seldom lived up to the size of his subjects, and the technical difficulties have made it impossible to get results commensurate with his ambitions. He had, however, one spectacular success, *Forty Thousand Horsemen*, a story of the Australian Light Horse in the last war. This got world-wide release because of the exciting action sequence at the end. Chauvel was given the job of making Australia's big war film, *Rats of Tobruk*, the story of the Australian divisions which held out so long in Tobruk. Unfortunately in an unhappy attempt to inject synthetic box office appeal into this picture, the story line got extremely muddled, and it had to be reckoned as a failure. These two films, *Forty Thousand Horsemen* and *Rats of Tobruk*, were the only two feature productions made in Australia during the war.

Altogether Australia's film history in the war has been rather unhappy. Their Department of Information completely failed to make a film record of any worth of their great war contribution. Obsessed with newsreel technique, the Department officials practically ignored documentaries. Any attempts they made at film making were shoddy studio reconstructions. The only exceptions were one or two films made by Ralph Smart (who had been trained in Britain) for the Air Force, and one film of New Guinea called *Jungle Patrol*, made by Tom Gurr, a Sydney journalist. The reason for this was mainly that there were no film men of any worth recruited into the Department of Information, and the Civil Servants were so taken in by the pseudo-glamour of the commercial film that they held documentary in contempt.

Yet the opportunities were endless. Amazing feats of ingenuity and enterprise were carried out in Australia without any film coverage. A highway to supply New Guinea was built right across Australia in a year. In Sydney, the world's largest dry dock was constructed under appalling wartime difficulties. In the unexplored north, air strips were cut out of the jungle in record time. And so on. To me coming from Britain, it was heart-breaking to see so many wonderful film chances thrown away. It was a heart-break also to find that responsible Australians felt this and everywhere one met a feeling of frustration and an appeal for help. Unfortunately the Civil Service had complete control, and I could do little.

Now a National Films Board has been created. It is based on the Canadian Board which operated so successfully during the war. Unfortunately six of the seven members of the Board are civil servants with little knowledge of film. The Commissioner appointed is a journalist rather than a film maker, and although enthusiastic and sincere, he is not the teacher that is the first necessity for Government films in Australia at the moment. The situation here is very similar to the situation in Britain fifteen years ago—a large amount of goodwill, a small amount of money, considerable enthusiasm but no one to direct it. Owing to the Australian resentment of external criticism, I am afraid that the type of films that will be produced by the Film Board will be self-laudatory rather than self-critical. And of course the critical films are the more important ones if they are to teach citizenship. Subjects like soil erosion, conservation of water, reafforestation, etc., are crying out for films. Let's hope we get them. I am terrified that we will see kangaroos, Koala bears, and fields of waving wheat.

Film-making facilities, apart from the natural one of fine scenery and sunlight, are exceedingly poor, and Cinesound Studios are a converted skating rink. The majority of equipment is home-made. It is amazing in its ingenuity, but the very fact that it is home-made tends to a lowering of standards. If you make something yourself, you are delighted if it works at all, and do not worry about the results it produces. The only other studio of any size is Pagewood, built in 1935, to Gaumont-British specification, to make the ill-fated *Flying Doctor*. Britain, on this film, made the usual hash of a goodwill gesture. Asked to send out a production unit, she did not send her top technicians. The film was a fearful flop. The result was that Pagewood went bankrupt, the equipment was dispersed and the first real chance of a film industry thrown away. This disaster was one of the things I had to live down. However Pagewood is still a good sound stage, and I believe that it could rise like the phoenix from its ashes. Properly equipped, with up-to-date material, it could be the centre of a small industry.

I believe that Australia can have successful film production provided it is kept modest and the right type of truly Australian outdoor subjects are undertaken. With the present inflated costs in Britain, action pictures can be turned out in Australia at a third the British prices. If they are any good, a considerable amount of the production costs can be recovered in Australia, and with improved flying facilities, artistes can be used there as easily as they can in the north of Scotland. Also, for the first time, the outdoor action picture, which has been a monopoly of America and the backbone of their industry, can be challenged. The locale for subjects does not need to be restricted to Australia. Just as it was a jumping-off ground to the whole of the East in wartime, so it can be a centre for films in the Islands, in Indonesia, and Malaya. There can be no thought of an Australian Hollywood arising, but there is a great opportunity to establish at least a small worthwhile industry which, apart from providing entertainment and employment, could help to establish in Australia the cultural roots it is striving for at the moment as part of the basis of its newly found national consciousness.

What struck me most during my whole time in Australia was how little we know about it. For one thing, it is a continent, not a country. It's so-called dead-heart contains some of the finest cattle country in the world. It has jungles (as thick as any in Burma) and permanent snow country. It has enormous skyscraper cities, and "ghost" gold towns now without an inhabitant. It has a capital, planted in the middle of nowhere, that is as yet strongly reminiscent of Welwyn Garden City. Altogether it is an exciting young country with a lot of faults but enormous potentials. Many Americans found it similar to what much of the States was like eighty years ago. It is a country we should know about. And film is the medium to use for such knowledge. Which all boils down to the fact that I liked Australia, and would like to make another film there.

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

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THE R.A.F. FILM UNIT

Few people will forget the shots of Genoa looking like a lake of fire in the surrounding darkness with the bursting bombs adding to the terror of the scene. Or the shots of the German planes, looking very close, disintegrating in the sky. Or the coast of France, still occupied by the Germans, approaching the camera as our planes went in for a low-level daylight attack. These shots are part of history and we record some facts about the unit that produced such magnificent, even if horrifying, material. Results were not achieved without cost. Thirteen members of the Unit lost their lives and five were taken prisoner. The story of the R.A.F. Film Unit is a fine one and we are happy to have been able, by courtesy of the Air Ministry, to give this brief account of its activities.

THE R.A.F. Film Unit was not started until the end of 1941. Its main purpose was to provide a film record of the part played by the R.A.F. in the war, but it was also to provide material and films to outside organisations, to film technical developments that could only, for reasons of security, be shot by R.A.F. personnel, and to make training films for internal consumption.

Men and equipment presented problems—A.C.T. helped with the former—but it was not until 1942 that the fifty members of the Unit moved from their one room in the Air Ministry to the airier spaces of Pinewood. Running a film unit on Service lines was no easy job, but under the successive leaderships of W/C Twist, W/C Baird and S/L Moyna this unorthodox set-up was fitted into Technical Training Command.

The Unit at Pinewood became known as "No 1 Film Production Unit" and was the base from which all filming at home and overseas was planned. No. 1 FPU was the parent Unit which "fed" the overseas detachments which covered R.A.F. activities in the Middle East, North Africa, Western Europe, U.S.A., Canada, South-East Asia, the Azores, Norway, Denmark, Italy, Sicily, Greece, Yugoslavia, Malta, Gibraltar. The units serving abroad covered the Middle East campaign up to the victory in Tunisia, the Anglo-American assault on North Africa, the landing in Italy at Salerno, the fall of Rome, the invasion of Southern France and the Greek landings. In S.E. Asia they filmed fighter and bomber operations against the Japanese. In Europe, Unit No. 4 filmed the war from D-Day across Europe into Germany. Unit No. 4 also had the job of filming the evidence of our bomber offensive for use in future operations. It was they who fitted the cameras into the wings of Typhoons and Tempests to cover the sensational rocket attacks. The material thus obtained was of great use to the designers of this new weapon, and to the tacticians who planned its use.

At home the Unit was making such films as *Operational Height*, *The Big Pack* and *Journey Together*. These films were primarily designed to make the non-fighting people in the R.A.F. feel that their job was important.

One sound film, eight reels in length, was produced to be shown on one or two days only. It happened in July, 1943, when an American officer visited W/C Twist and asked for his help on a most urgent matter. The result was that for seven days, with only three breaks for sleep, a section at Pinewood worked continuously, under conditions of the utmost secrecy, to produce a 16 mm. film which, when completed, was immediately flown out to North Africa. The film was a complete sound and visual briefing for the pilots who, a few days later, smashed the great oil centre of Ploesti.

Perhaps the most unusual use to which the Unit's productions were put occurred in 1944 when a special request was received from the French for some R.A.F. films to show in the Department of Savoy. The Maquis were in control at the time but they were ringed by the German armies, and when the R.A.F. delivered the films they had to cross the German lines to do so. The films were shown in cinemas at which special collections were made for a Maquis hospital.

It was S/L Moyna who persuaded someone to let him fly with a cameraman in 1942. No one liked the idea at all but it was to result in the special film flight in Bomber Command as well as planes specially fitted for cinematography in Coastal Command and the Second Tactical Air Force.

The value to the public of the vivid action pictures secured by the "Ops." cameramen and shown all over the world does not need to be emphasised, but their value to the Service, perhaps is not so clearly understood. Here are some of the achievements of operational cinematography: On daylight attacks conclusive evidence was obtained of the accuracy and intensity of the bombing and the precise route followed could be examined afterwards to check any deviations from the planned course; films made at night could be examined to show, not only the accuracy and concentration of the attack, but its development—particularly the speed with which the fires built up in the target areas; bombs and bombing gear have been re-designed because FPU pictures revealed weaknesses, previously unsuspected; "chance" shots of technical interest were obtained—e.g. pictures of the "shock waves" of bombs exploding and the German anti-aircraft weapon the "scarecrow". The film that undoubtedly aroused the greatest technical interest was the Unit's record of the sinking of the *Tirpitz*; the film shows precisely where each of the 12,000 lb. bombs exploded and has been minutely studied, frame by frame, by air, naval and ordnance experts. Another strip of film that made history was secured by an FPU Mosquito that accompanied the first low-level attack on a V1 site. Operational cinematography as developed by the Unit is now a permanent Air Force requirement.

At Pinewood six small rooms housed the entire organisation for covering all operations of every Command of the R.A.F., nevertheless, there was hardly a single raid of major importance after July, 1943, that was not filmed by an R.A.F. cameraman from Pinewood. The section was in direct contact by "scrambler" telephone with Operational Commands and was kept informed of impending operations: such strict security rules were observed that, when a call about a planned operation was expected, other personnel in the studios were not allowed to use the passage past the Ops. section's rooms.

Pinewood was an operational base from which men went straight to war: cameramen who left the studios by car in the morning were in action over occupied territory within a matter of hours; others breakfasted at Pinewood after a night over the Ruhr. Nine members of the "Ops" Section, including S/L Moyna, were awarded the D.F.C. and three others received the Croix de Guerre for their work covering the operations of the famous Lorraine Squadron of the R.A.F.

All FPU material was made available to the Newsreel Companies free of cost. On their side, the newsreels co-operated by presenting to the public a fine pictorial record of the work and achievements of the Royal Air Force throughout the war. Extensive use was also made of the Unit's material in the War Pictorial Newsreel, circulating in the Middle East, and, although no statistics are available, it is also known that stories provided by the FPU have been widely used by newsreels in America and other parts of the world.

THE SUPPLY OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS

(*continued from page* 21)

The probable cost of the scheme alarms some people. Either the right visual material is potentially so valuable that it must be made available—and there is much evidence that this is so—or it is not. If it is, then the problem of costs must be faced. It is important to realise that, since more than 95 per cent of our educational institutions are maintained from the Treasury and Local Council funds, practically all production and distribution costs and profits on educational material, even under unsubsidised speculative enterprise as in the case of textbooks, come ultimately from public funds. But a spate of speculative film production, from which the pattern of educational requirements could be expected to emerge by selective demand, is for various reasons highly improbable. Some form of official action appears to be essential. Planned and commissioned production costs no more than provision by speculative enterprise, even without the guarantee against loss, and may well be the more economical as well as the more efficient way of meeting teaching needs.

Those who believe that visual material is valuable in education cannot ignore the issues.

THE SCIENTIFIC FILM ASSOCIATION

The SFA Catalogue of Films of General Scientific Interest is due to be published at 5/-. Orders are now being taken at the SFA head office, 34 Soho Square, W.1.

NEW NON-THEATRICAL FILMS

THE following films have become available during the last three months on the M.O.I. Mobile Film Units, and through the Central Film Library. A programme typical of those given to general urban and village audiences would be represented by one of the magazine films, *Britain Can Make It*, with the first four listed below. Factory audiences receive shorter programmes, say a magazine film with one of the first three films. The first twelve films have been shown regularly to many kinds of audiences in all parts of Britain, the others on special occasions or by request.

The Last Shot. Produced for the British and Netherland Governments. *Camera and Direction:* John Ferno. *Musical Direction:* Muir Mathieson. *Commentary:* written by Arthur Calder-Marshall. 16 mins.
This film has all the qualities of directness and economy one expects from Ferno. The delirium of Liberation Day in Amsterdam is contrasted with the devastation and famine accompanying the early months of peace, the ruined streets, the breached dykes, the salt-drenched fields, the pastures robbed of their Friesian cattle, the dreariness of enforced unemployment through lack of coal and raw materials. Each aspect of war's uncomfortable aftermath is underlined with telling visual illustrations. Particularly moving are the parentless Dutch children, "anonymous citizens of tomorrow, the little old men and women of Europe." The film ends with a reminder of the new spirit in Europe and of the need for the more fortunate nations to make sacrifices to help these despoiled territories. Altogether this is a most salutary and impressive document.

Public Opinion. *Production:* Verity for D.A.K. 15 mins.
A lively A.B.C.A. discussion film on the various forces which mould public opinion. All the direct and indirect influences are shown—newspapers, magazines, popular digests, posters, exhibitions, casual conversation, argument, oratory, radio, films. Opinion is shown being mobilised through voluntary movements, political parties and trade unions. The points are made briefly and dramatically, and the film ends on a disarmingly humorous note. The responsibility of the individual towards all this is brought out.

Penicillin. 20 mins. (Reviewed *D.N.L.* Vol. 5, issue 48, p. 77.)

Fenlands. 19 mins. (Reviewed *D.N.L.* Vol. 6, issue 51, p. 8).

Myra Hess. *Production:* Crown for M.O.I. 11 mins.
This film is made out of material shot for Jenning's *Diary for Timothy*. It shows the famous pianist (who at times appears to be distressed by the lighting) playing the whole of one movement of Beethoven's Appassionata Sonata. Well-shot, well-recorded and sensitively edited, it has great intrinsic interest for a concert-goer.

Round Pegs. *Production:* Shell Film Unit for M.O.I. 15 mins.
This is a short non-specialised film edited by Sylvia Cummins from the full length *Personnel Selection in the British Army* 1944—*Recruits*. (Reviewed *D.N.L.* Vol. 6, issue 51, p. 9.)

Proud City. 26 mins. (Reviewed *D.N.L.* Vol. 6. issue 51, p. 8.)

Total War in Britain. *Production:* Films of Fact for M.O.I. *Producer and Editor:* Paul Rotha. *Script*: Ritchie Calder and Miles Tomalin. *Music*: William Alwyn.
This translation of the White Paper on the British War Effort into film represents a successful fulfilment of an important function of documentary—the interpretation in simple human terms of official documents and statistics. Actuality shots and animated isotypes are used to clarify and humanise the detail and argument of the White Paper.

Worker and War Front. No. 18. 11 mins.
Items: (1) Razed Buildings Raise Playing Fields; (2) Magnesia; British Sea and Lime Save Imports; (3) Planning in the Potteries.

Britain Can Make It. No. 1. 10 mins.
Items: (1) Concrete Drydocks; (2) Motion Study in Factory Production; (3) War Artists Exhibition in London.

Britain Can Make It. No. 2. 10 mins.
Items: (1) Works "Uncles"—Better Factory Relations; (2) Bathrooms off the Belt; (3) Workers' Fashion Parade.
These three cine-magazines were produced by Films of Fact. *Worker and War Front* 18 is the last number of a notable wartime series which, in spite of occasional lapses into triviality, has maintained a high standard of content, camera-work and editing. No. 18 is one of the best of these issues; particularly lucid and well shot is the middle item on the manufacture of magnesia. *Britain Can Make It* is a new series for peacetime, to be released non-theatrically month by month. The main item in No. 1, on motion study, is a highly effective piece of movie exposition; Sir Stafford Cripps adds a few words of approval for psychological and physiological aids to a more rationally organised form of manual work. The original wartime commentator, Colin Wills, returns with No. 2, to which Basic have contributed a well-photographed section on the prefabrication of bathroom and fireplace units. Wills' robust clarity make him obviously the right choice for the series whose main outlet will be on sub-standard film.

The Plan and the People. 20 mins. (Reviewed *D.N.L.* Vol. 6, issue 51, p. 8.)

It Began on The Clyde. *Production:* Greenpark for M.O.I. *Producer:* Ralph Keene. *Director*: Ken Annakin. *Original Story:* Brian Smith. *Photography*: Charles Marlborough. 15 mins.
This is a more successful example of the "personal narrative" style of exposition than some recent attempts. A harassed G.P. and his patient, a rundown shipyard worker, provide the thread for an account of how Scottish Emergency Hospitals were diverted, in the absence of battle casualties, to civilian needs. The evolution and working details of the Clyde Basic Scheme are described.

Achimota. *Photography and Direction:* John Page for M.O.I. *Commentary:* written and spoken by Dr. Julian Huxley, F.R.S. *Music:* recorded by African Choirs in Northern Territories of the Gold Coast. 19 mins.
A useful description of life and work at the twenty-year-old co-educational Achimota College on the Gold Coast. The College has Secondary, Teacher-Training and First-year University Departments, and teaching of academic subjects, of arts and crafts related to African life, and of scientific husbandry are shown. Special value is attached to the training of women teachers in a region where only one in eight of the population receives any education at all.

The Story of Money. Gryphon for Banking Information Services. 15 mins. (Reviewed in *D.N.L.* Vol. 5, issue 49, p. 92.)

It Might Be You. *Production:* Crown for M.O.I. *Producer:* Basil Wright. *Director:* Michael Gordan. *Photography:* Fred Gamage. *Recording*: Charles Poulton. 15 mins.
This film aims at shocking audiences into an awareness that it is the carelessness of ordinary people, pedestrians, cyclists and motorists that lies at the back of most road accidents. A family out in the car for an afternoon run, a cyclist who warns his daughter to be careful before he leaves her, and a young fellow whose pleasurable anticipation of meeting the girl friend helps to make him into a jay-walker are the characters. In the final accident, the pedestrian is killed, the cyclist shaken up, and a young boy in the family car loses an arm. Deft characterisation, an air of casualness, suspense and an uncompromising dénouement are all made to contribute, without over-emphasis or sensationalism, to the desired effect.

Man—One Family. *Production:* Ealing Studios for M.O.I. *Director:* Ivor Montagu. *Editor:* Sidney Cole. *Scientific Advisers:* Professor J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S., and Dr. Julian Huxley, F.R.S. (who also speaks the commentary). 18 mins.
A title explains that the M.O.I. produced and translated this film into sixteen languages to show in Liberated Europe.* It is a shrewd, hard hitting, very popular-styled anti-Fascist essay on the fallacies of race purity and race superiority. As might be expected from Montagu and Cole, the treatment is extremely lively. Newsreel sequences and animated diagrams are effectively mixed together, and there is an amusing cartoon sequence to illustrate the libellous comments on other nations of a self-righteous sixteenth century Scot. While it carries an outsize punch, this film gets across a number of serious and important truths about human relationships.

Lessons from the Air. *Production:* Merton Park Studios for British Council. 15 mins.
Behind-the-scenes organisation and personalities of School Broadcasting. Made for overseas theatrical release, this is a pleasant film. School Broadcasting is, however, one of the big successes of British Broadcasting; there is room for a more detailed analytical study of its evolution and other activities.

Channel Islands. *Production:* Crown for M.O.I. *Producer:* Basil Wright. *Director:* George Bryant. *Photography:* Jonah Jones. 16 mins.
The story of life on the Islands from the first arrival of the predatory if *ganz korrekt* Germans to the early days of liberation in 1945. Many of the people of the Islands, and particularly those active in the underground movement, re-enact the parts they played in those days.

(*Continued at foot of next page*)

* Nevertheless we hear that the European Section of the C.O.I. has decided that it is not suitable for export at present.

DOCUMENTARY IN DENMARK

DENMARK was once one of the principal film producing centres in Europe. Her films were famous all over the Continent. The arrival of sound greatly curtailed the industry, for outside Denmark the Danish language is understood only in Norway: it is not generally comprehensible even in Sweden. Whether it is because of traditions handed down from silent days, or whether it is because the Danes are naturally a frugal and efficient people, they have managed to make the production of Danish studio features pay their way in spite of a language group of less than eight million people. And even though the highest budget dare not exceed £15,000 (shades of Gaby Pascal!), some of the films surpass the standards reached by British features costing ten times as much, witness Carl Dreyer's *Vredens Dag* (Day of Wrath) and *Den usynlige Hær* (The Invisible Army), a film on the Danish resistance movement directed by Johan Jacobsen, who formerly worked in Britain with Strand.*

Denmark also has a flourishing documentary industry. As in Britain, but unlike most other European countries, Danish documentary looks to the Government and, to a lesser extent, to industry for sponsorship. In consequence there has been some sort of economic continuity with the excellent double result that Danish documentary workers have been able to gain experience and a certainty of touch, and the Danish Government has a cultural asset of great national and international importance. Finance for the films comes partly from a tax on cinema receipts which is devoted to cultural ends including film production, and partly from grants from Government departments and national associations for films to serve particular and usually more specialised needs. Distribution is handled both theatrically and non-theatrically. Each cinema is compelled by law to devote a small proportion of its screen time each month to a short—usually 10-minute—Government reel. In this way a system has been developed not unlike the British 5-minute film scheme introduced so successfully early in the war. Non-theatrical distribution is hampered by a shortage of projectors, but since the firm of Petersen and Poulsen builds an excellent 16 mm. sound projector, Denmark may presently find herself well placed in this respect.

When the Germans invaded Denmark, the feature and documentary film technicians were in two minds. Should they cease work completely, thus abandoning their screens to U.F.A. and the enemy and destroying—perhaps irredeemably—something peculiarly their own? Or should they attempt to keep their industry going, attempting to maintain their film culture intact without allowing it to be diverted to serving the interests of the Germans? The Danish technicians, like their comrades in France, decided on the latter course. In addition, they developed an underground film movement, secretly recording life under the Germans. They even managed to export material to England via Sweden, and many technicians played an important part in the powerful Danish underground movement.

Films made for public distribution during the occupation were confined mainly to studies of national institutions and industries, though a few practical films were made on such subjects as road safety and health. Most of these films seem today a little strange and remote, for the Nazis made both public service in any genuine sense and personal expression in any profound sense impossible.

Since the liberation, Government sponsorship has enabled the Danish documentary movement to avoid—at any rate in part—the aestheticism which has diseased other documentary schools all the way from Prague to Paris. The fact that Danish films are made to serve a public purpose has kept them practical and healthy. The relationships between film makers and the Government and the choice of film subjects reflect social problems already familiar in Britain. Take, for example, the twenty-five Government documentaries under consideration, planned, or in production at the end of 1945. They include films on drinking water, on the reception of refugee children from Holland, on safety in industry, on the railway postal services, on lighthouses, on American visitors in Copenhagen, on the problem of the shortage of domestic help, and on the relations between the citizen and the army. Films already circulating tackle road accidents, blood donors, child welfare, salvage and a dozen other subjects as familiar in Britain as they are in Denmark.

It is not possible here to do more than to isolate a few examples of films for special notice from the eighty completed between January, 1941, and December, 1945. All are beautifully photographed: they dance with light. Their musical accompaniment is nearly always effective, and Kai Rosenberg is in the front rank of documentary composers. To British taste music is sometimes introduced where none seems necessary—as in Hagen Hasselbalch's excellent film on the life cycle of a toad—*Tudsen*. Sometimes, too, there seems to be a clash between music and picture. Søren Melson's pleasantly conceived *Kutter H.*71 (Sailing Boat H.71) is not improved by a flippant jazz score, to which however the film is most ingeniously—almost too ingeniously—cut. Indeed, many of the films display remarkable virtuosity in their editing, though this very virtuosity is sometimes self-

(*continued on next page*)

* *Vredens Dag* was reviewed in *D.N.L.* (Vol. V, issue 50, p. 103). Both films will shortly be presented in London at the Academy cinema.

New Non-Theatrical Films (*continued from page* 24)

Library of Congress (*American Scene Series*). O.W.I. 19 mins.
An enquiry about copyright provides an opening link between a mobile library truck in the Virginia Hills and the Library of Congress. The film is then mainly an account of the history and facilities of the Library, with its six million books and pamphlets and four hundred and fourteen miles of shelves. There are scenes showing reading rooms, air-conditioned store rooms, filing systems, Chinese writers in the Oriental Division and mechanical devices for transporting request slips and volumes. Original manuscripts and documents, like the Declaration of Independence, give an opportunity for a discussion of the beginnings of American democracy. Early newsreels from the Library's cinema archives are included and sociologists in the field are seen recording Negro and hill billy folksongs. This film would make a useful item in any programme on Civics and the Social Services.

Training in Mechanised Mining. *Production:* Films of Great Britain for M.O.I. 26 mins.
This clear and well-made account of the work of the Sheffield Mines Mechanisation Training Centre deserves the widest possible showing to audiences of those engaged in, or about to enter, the mining industry. Additionally, it has considerable interest for people concerned with industrial training in other fields. The Centre was the first of its kind in the world, and for planning and equipment must, one imagines, be unrivalled. After stressing the human factor in mechanisation, the film opens with an account of welfare conditions and of the financial provisions made for men nominated as trainees from collieries all over Britain. There are specialised courses lasting from one to four weeks, but the film concentrates on the six-months' course for men with little previous knowledge. A thorough acquaintance with applied electricity is rightly stressed as the basis of training in mechanisation, and instruction is given in all the relevant aspects of D.C. and A.C. operation. In the fitting and machine shops, the trainee learns to interpret blue-prints and cope with the repair and erection of machines. He is taught electrical and oxy-acetylene welding. The most spectacular side of the Centre is in the model galleries; the extent to which these simulate realistically working conditions is shown by cutting in actual underground scenes for comparison. Galleries are devoted to typical workings and mechanised set-ups, Roman Pillar, Long Wall, Duck Bill, etc. One gallery carries signalling devices. The whole treatment is interesting to the lay spectator, who will derive from it a reasonably adequate notion of mechanised mining.

Land Drainage. *Production:* Realist for I.C.I. *Director:* Brian Smith. *Photography:* Cyril Phillips. 20 mins.

Sugar Beet (Pt. 1: *Cultivation;* Pt. 2: *Harvesting*). *Production:* Blackheath for M.O.I. *Director:* Ralph Cathles. 24 mins; 12 mins.
These agricultural films are workmanlike and efficient. *Land Drainage* is interesting both to layman and farmer. It shows how the water table in a typical catchment area is controlled through various types of drainage. The animated diagram work is exceptionally good. The agricultural film has to achieve, for discussion group audiences, a compromise between plain instruction and the more discursive techniques employed in adult education. This film carries plenty of useful fact, and, at the same time, has a pleasant human quality. Two Scientific Film Societies report, incidentally, that they have found it a very acceptable item in their programmes.

The two parts of the second film concentrate on the methods and equipment used on the average farm with about eight acres devoted to sugar beet. They deal with the preparation, drilling, cultivation and harvesting of the crop.

Documentary in Denmark (*continued from page* 25)

destructive: Karl Roos' and Søren Melson's beautifully directed and photographed film on cattle—*Koen*—degenerates into a sort of ballet of slaughter-houses, meat, offal and heaven alone knows what besides. On the other hand, Bjarne Henning-Jensen's *Sukker* (Sugar) uses cross-cutting effectively to give a sense of people and their relation to the fields and factories in which they work.

One other quality in Danish films deserves attention—a kind of light-heartedness in the direct propaganda films which makes them particularly effective: at their best, they leave most British efforts in this direction behind. Indeed, perhaps the best of all the films made in Denmark is *Kornet er i Fare* (The Corn is in Danger)—a plea to the public to take precautions against the corn weevil and to call in the local pest officer. This sort of film subject has faced nearly every director in Britain. (Is there anyone who has not been asked at one time or another to make a film to persuade people to exterminate rats?) Yet no one has tackled such subjects with the gusto and imagination that this film displays. The corn weevils are given a collective evil personality which will send every cinema-goer hurrying to his larder, his corn bin or his barn after the performance. Imaginative scripting, clear direction, fine music and slick editing have been combined to produce a completely satisfying effect.

Finally, one must mention Theodor Christensen's masterly impressionist feature length study of Boumeister and Wain, the firm of ship builders, and Carl Dreyer's moving and finely directed *Modrehjælpe* (Mother Help—a film on maternal welfare) which, with *Kornet er i Fare* and *Sukker* is undoubtedly one of the three best films yet made in Denmark.

Denmark is one of the only countries in Europe, other than Britain and Russia, whose film makers and creators have been harnessed by the Government to serve the national purpose. For this reason, Danish documentary is firmly rooted and can give Denmark a place in the world of cinema which may be denied to larger, richer and more powerful countries which have not mobilised their film talent. The strength of her film school is its technical facility, its humour, its humanity, and its directness. Its weakness lies in the fact that the films have sometimes tended to play with surface values only, and to substitute technical virtuosity for the more solid qualities of exposition. Such weaknesses are mainly the product of the invasion. The practical problems of public information which the Danish directors are now tackling are bringing their own correctives with them. It is certain that the Henning-Jensens, the Hasselbalchs, Christensen, Skot-Hansen, Melson, the Roos', Dreyer, Rosenberg, Palsbo and anumber of others have between them a splendid range of talent. It seems likely that Denmark has a place assured for her in world documentary.

FILM TITLING

by Barnet Freedman

PRODUCERS and directors of films are not to be expected to know about type, lettering and display design, for this is a highly specialised activity. Its application to the film has not received a great deal of study in the past. In this country the experiments made, judging by the achievements, have been negligible, and although an insistent vulgarity pervades American productions in this sphere, they have at least gone to a fair amount of trouble and obvious expense to obtain their results. Even if a high level of taste and scholarship has not been achieved, some startling and novel effects are certainly to be observed. Movement and "filmic" texture, colour and arabesque are used with considerable ingenuity, and the resultant vitality often contributes to the general liveliness of otherwise pedestrian films. A close study of American work in this department of film making reveals that they possess highly expert technical men and machines engaged solely on the production of film titles.

In England this work is either on a level with *Comic Cuts* or else it is over "refined" and bloodless. The dead hand of someone with a little knowledge is often discernible. A few firms exist who carry out instructions slavishly and without imagination, firms employing highly skilled craftsmen, who could if they were required to do so, produce work of a very fine technical standard. In fact, their work lacks character, is often vulgar, and there is little evidence of any attempt to exploit a field which offers immense opportunities to an imaginative designer. The work is obviously ordered to satisfy a producer who is generally ignorant in matters concerning type and display, who is himself too overwrought with the larger aspects of film making to give the matter much attention, and who is often unable to state his requirements until the last moment. The manufacturing firms have then to hurry and rush through the titles at the eleventh hour; experiments and alterations cannot be made; what is done has to be "good enough".

The crux of the whole matter is that the perfectly efficient and fine lettering craftsmen, employed by the title manufacturing firms, require independent and expert direction and guidance. This they do not receive. An artist who has proved himself to be first-class as a designer of lettering and display work, a man who has not only scholarship and taste, but great technical ability too, should be asked to study the subject. He should be afforded all the technical help and advice that can be procured. In the course of two years he should be requested to design and produce various sets of titles, which would exploit all the film is capable of in this branch of the art.

(*Continued on page* 29)

TELEPEDAGOGICS

SHOULD one congratulate University College, Exeter, for having been so enterprising as to found a Visual Education Centre, or condole with them for hatching out such a very academic chick? With its four years' start over all other institutions in Britain and most institutions in other parts of the world Exeter can yet become a focus for information and experiment about every kind of visual technique in education. It can yet make decisive contributions to the theory and practice of the subject. It can help teachers to make the best use of such materials as already exist. It can help them to formulate policy. It can help them to procure the kinds of visual equipment, including films, they need. It can help producers to overcome the technical and psychological problems at present inseparable from the production of teaching films. If Exeter does not do these things, someone else will take the job over, and Exeter will have thrown away an opportunity to contribute to the cultural and educational life of the globe. It is still uncertain whether Exeter will be able to profit from its enterprise in spite of its four years' lead. The Visual Education Centre seems to be attempting to establish theory without an adequate groundwork of practice and observation in the classroom; windy generalisations, overdressed with words, come pouring out when one wants simple statements of principle; Exeter is taking what can be the fatal path of being interested in the organisation of educational organisations for its own sake.

All this is a pity, for somewhere in the verbosity, confusion of categories, muddled thinking, heresy hunting and dogmatics, there is sometimes to be found good sense. For example, the insistence that the film must not be separated from other visual techniques, and that these in turn must be considered in relation to "the totality of education techniques" is sound. Pleas that teachers must not only understand but command the making of films for the classroom cannot be repeated too often. Claims that the work of the private film maker—the "amateur"—must be considered alongside that of the professional will be endorsed by everyone who believes that the film can and must become a handy instrument of public expression.

These grains of good sense have to be separated from a deal of chaff. Examine, for instance, the recent Exeter publication—*Visual Education and the New Teacher*, by G. P. Meredith.* Typographically hideous (should not visual education begin at home?), this booklet seeks to orientate the teacher towards the new visual media which are coming tumbling into his classroom. It also attempts to establish the necessity of introducing a universal system of schooling based on the Dalton plan. What may be called the Exeter touch is revealed on page 9 where is introduced the term *telepedagogics* (Oh, Semantics! Oh, Linguistics! Oh, Fiddlestics!) After giving Scotland a drubbing for whittling down the film till it has scarcely any function to perform other than to illustrate a lesson, Meredith enters into an interesting consideration of the "freedom" of the teacher. He comes to the conclusion that "freedom" in the classroom, however desirable, is rarely or never attained. The teacher's work is consciously or unconsciously determined by the textbook which is "the oldest form of prefabricated instruction". Indeed, Meredith argues that it is not the teacher but the textbook writer and the textbook publisher who largely determine the curriculum.

Meredith drops this interesting argument on page 19 and does not return to it till page 47, where he asks the fundamental question, are teachers going to command the visual media which will presently come flooding into their classrooms, or are they going to repeat the mistake of their Victorian and Edwardian forbears and hand over their prerogative to the publishers —that is, in this case, to the speculative film producers and Wardour Street? Though Meredith makes it clear that he is on the side of the teachers every time, his attempts to describe an organisation by which they shall get what they want is both timid and obscure.

What lies between pages 19 and 47? It is a little difficult to say, for Meredith rides several hobby horses, loses himself in history and confuses his categories in a way which would make Immanuel Kant turn twice in his grave and sneeze. Seeking to show that mechanisation and standardisation have been an inseparable part of educational technique at least since the invention of movable type and that, far from mechanising teaching, machines can help to humanise it, Meredith gives up a page and a half to listing important inventions which have influenced the technique of teaching. What might have been an interesting paragraph in the present book or an interesting monograph by itself is expanded to a chapter in which justice cannot be done to the subject and which robs the book as a whole both of continuity and perspective. Dropping history Meredith then worries away at the Dalton plan, where again he has interesting things to say, but by now the structure of his book has become overloaded and malformed.

From page 47 or so the book meanders on to the end, expiring less with a bang than with a whimper in a couple of pages of summary which make this wordy, inconclusive and misty book even more wordy, inconclusive and misty than it might otherwise have been.

* *Visual Education and the New Teacher*. A Study of Children and Machines, of Organisations and Men. G. Patrick Meredith. A *Daily Mail* School Aid Publication for the Visual Education Centre. Exeter. 1946. Pp. 64.

The London Scientific Film Society showed a series of films on Asdic on Sunday, February 17th. Geoffrey Bell's most recent film *Personnel Selection—Officers*, had its première at the Society on March 17th. A new Danish film, *Tudsen* (The Toad) was also screened.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Documentary Film, 1922-1945. (*The Museum of Modern Art, New York.* 1946.)

This is the printed programme of a series of film shows arranged by Miss Iris Barry to be presented at the Museum of Modern Art between January and July this year. People who take the whole syllabus will be able to see masterpieces from half the countries of the world. Here are newsreels by Pathé made in Seville in 1909; *Kino Pravda* from Russia, *Nanook of the North*, Bruce Woolfe's *The Battle of the Somme* (it is a little sad that one cannot see this early British masterpiece without crossing the Atlantic), *The Covered Wagon*, *Grass*, *Berlin*, and *The Plow that Broke the Plains*. The British school is represented by a score or more of films—*Housing Problems*, *Enough to Eat*, *Night Mail*, *Song of Ceylon*, *Industrial Britain*, *Transfer of Power*, *The Londoners*, and many others. *Drifters* alone is missing because "the negative has been mislaid somewhere in Britain." Luckily it has been found again, and perhaps Miss Barry will be able to squeeze it in, for no historical review of documentary can be complete without it. Here too is a splendid selection of the best wartime films from Britain and America. The printed programme is detailed and accurate; it is a work of reference in itself. Altogether the occasion is a notable one, and British documentary is under an obligation to Miss Barry for so magnificently displaying its works.

Bernard Shaw Among the Innocents. E. W. and M. M. Robson. (*The Sydneyan Society.* 1946. 1*s.* 6*d.*)

A wild and not altogether successful smack at Bernard Shaw, whom the Robsons not only accuse of besmirching the British way of life, and insulting the Royal Family, but also make responsible for everything they conceive to be iniquitous in British films from *Colonel Blimp* to *The Madonna of the Seven Moons*.

The Art of the Camera. Frederick Young.
The Film Director. Charles Frend.
Screen Writing. Bridget Boland.
The Film as a Visual Art. George Pearson.
The Documentary Film. Donald Alexander.
(*The British Film Institute*, 1946.)

These booklets are reprints of lectures given at the Film Institute's 1945 Summer School devoted to Film Appreciation. Frederick Young, Charles Frend and Miss Boland attempt a brief and objective description of the processes of film making from their own particular points of view, and their three books together make a useful and interesting symposium. Pearson and Alexander approach their subject from a critical rather than from a descriptive point of view, and it is interesting to contrast their outlooks. Pearson has all of thirty years' film work behind him. His reputation dates back to the 'twenties when he became a famous director of silent films. Today he is making no less useful if less spectacular films for the peoples of Africa at the Colonial Film Unit. For him the film must appeal directly to the emotions or it is nearly valueless. One feels he would not recognise, or at least would not like, the school of film aesthetic with its roots in public service and public education which Alexander expounds in his most stimulating paper. Not that Alexander would avoid emotion, but for him emotion must grow out of the circumstances dealt with in the film, and not out of a

more or less artificial clash of sex or personality. It must come from the presentation of information "in such a way that the audience is thrilled and excited and prepared to accept the information, not necessarily as true, not necessarily as the last word on the matter, but as *important*—as having bearing on their own individual lives". For Alexander, "the greatest single need of our time is . . . to achieve coherence, to get people to understand and believe that their own lives, scientific knowledge, and the machine, are all part and parcel of the same coherent 'thing'—'humanity'." The documentary film, he argues, has been developed in answer to "a crying social need . . . to use every means at our disposal to combat [the present] incoherent situation, with its devastating effects on humanity, culminating in two world wars in twenty-five years". From a broad general treatment of his subject, he passes on to a detailed examination of the documentary film, its uses, and the changes he considers to be necessary if it is to flourish. He ends with a trenchant plea to decentralise film making. He would break down what he conceives to be its London isolation. He would send out the film-makers to live and work in the great cities in the Midlands and the North, fitting their efforts into a nationally conceived plan.

Alexander's pamphlet provides a most useful answer to the often repeated question: What does Documentary really mean? It is constructively critical at the same time.

FILM TITLING

(*Continued from page* 26)

A responsible film organisation, possibly in co-operation with a number of important film companies, the Central Office of Information and the various documentary concerns, should found between them a chair, scholarship or bursary to enable the artist to go into the whole subject thoroughly. He would produce titles which were static, and others which had movement. He would experiment fully with the use of colour, types old and new, hand-drawn letters, cut-out letters, scripts, roman capitals, italics and half-uncials, moving backgrounds, moving captions, illustrations, decorations, lights and shadows, transparencies, superimpositions, perspectives and fade outs. Indeed, every method of tampering with the three dimensions and their manifold possibilities would be fully gone into, to the lasting benefit of the British film industry. The right man would produce a volume of work that would set a high standard. A distinguished text-book could be published on the final results, which should have a great sale for students and practitioners of the film.

The fee paid to a designer should bear some relation to the vast sums of money spent annually on rubbish. Most of the important film companies in this country buy rubbish, like it, and understand nothing else. They will not consider these remarks of any merit whatever. Perhaps the documentary film makers, who have a great sympathy and understanding of such subjects, will get together and do something about it.

TWO FILMS FOR THE THEATRES

Town Meeting of the World. Crown for M.O.I. monthly release. *Producer:* Basil Wright. *Director:* Graham Wallace. *Distribution:* C.F.L. 12 mins.

After a commentary introduction the sound track of this film is simply Clement Attlee's opening address at the United Nations General Assembly in London. But after scenes of the actual meeting with Attlee speaking in his unimpassioned but straightforward and reasoning style, the cameras of the world are made to give us pictures of the human content of the ideas he conjures up. The misery in the faces of refugees, the heroism of D-Day commandos, the coldly displayed horror of the Belsen corpses, the demonstrations of liberated towns show what he means by "great sacrifices", "the common good" and "our great task". Scenes of the tilling of the soil in Europe and Asia, the harvesting of familiar wheat and unfamiliar cane, point the content of his oration when it speaks of world nutrition; we see our slums and "foreign" slums, when he speaks of standards of living.

Town Meeting of the World foreshadows an interesting new approach to film. It is natural that it should come from documentary, and particularly from Crown, which of all the documentary units, has shown most often that it has a lively and sensitive "film ear". Perhaps because this film seems something in the nature of an exercise in a new variation of technique—with a social and political orientation—it seems to have had a cool reception from the critics. It has disciplined its scope and pattern to Attlee's speech—that is the "script"—and sketches in the human tones, making of that speech a permanent, instead of transient, creative work enriched with emotional quality, making it something even greater than it was. The critics do not seem to have seen it as more than just another film.

The dramatic significance of what Attlee said, in the main, was felt only by people who could invest his words with a meaning personal to themselves. Many people are not able to do that kind of thing at all easily—as the psychologists say, only a minority of the population is capable of conceptional thought. *Town Meeting of the World* is important because it shows one way to help people to see *themselves* as involved in the tasks which humanity has before it.

Cyprus is an Island. Greenpark for M.O.I. *Director:* Ralph Keene. *Photography:* George Still. *Script*: Laurie Lee. 34 mins.

In three reels, this film successfully gives an overall impression of the little-publicised Mediterranean Island which has a history dating back into antiquity. The main thing lacking is the political fact that the inhabitants feel more closely allied to Greece than to Britain, and that successive British Governments, determined to maintain Cyprus as a Crown Colony, have indulged in numerous and not very pleasant repressions of the islanders' legitimate aspirations.

Considered filmically, this is a beautiful job of work—as good as any we have had in Ralph Keene's style, and he has been more than competently served by his cameraman and script writer. Every shot is a joy to watch and the film flows in a smooth, effortless manner. Economic and agricultural problems such as afforestation, soil erosion and drought are presented with clarity and freshness, revealing the fundamentals and defining the solutions in terms of human effort and modern ideas, overcoming age-old prejudices and, sometimes, sabotage. The old goat-herd, for instance, who can only think of revenge against a whole community when his goats are no longer permitted to eat the young trees, is an almost lovable and intensely human character acting his part with a vigour that would put most professional actors to shame. Altogether, an interesting film, beautifully shot, but evading some of the important political issues which have concerned the Cypriots in recent years.

THE TECHNIQUE OF ANAESTHESIA

(*Continued from page* 31)

film might well be supplemented by a second part dealing with simple methods of resuscitation (e.g. Leonard Hill's method of inversion), suitable for out-patient departments or domiciliary surgery.

Operational Shock is a concise presentation of the factors which contribute to the development of shock during the course of a surgical operation. The part played by anaesthesia, especially when inefficiently managed, is clearly indicated.

Handling and Care of the Patient presents an aspect of operating theatre work which is sometimes neglected because of divided responsibility. This film, which is well planned and executed, provides lessons for all members of the theatre staff—nurses, anaesthetist and surgeon.

This series of films is a notably successful effort to provide fundamental instruction in the administration of anaesthetics by means of well-directed photography accompanied by adequate, clearly enunciated commentary. Anaesthetics, taught didactically, too often produces merely somnolence in the listener. The subject is so essentially practical that its pictorial presentation, as seen in this series, is much more effective than hours of lecturing. In the overcrowded medical curriculum of today, in which the time allotted to the subject of anaesthetics is so little, this series of films, covering the main practical points of instruction, must be welcome to teacher and student alike. For the latter, the preliminary knowledge gained will enable him to proceed with greater intelligence and confidence to actual clinical practice.

Much credit is due to Drs. Magill and Organe and their colleagues on the anaesthetics staff of the Westminster Hospital, who, under first-class professional production, have made the films.

The Technique of Anaesthesia

A series of eleven films made for I.C.I. by the Realist Film Unit in 1944-45. Reviewed by an anaesthetist.

	Title	*Director*	*Length in mins.*
1.	**Signs and Stages of Anaesthesia**	Margaret Thomson	23
2.	**Open Drop Ether**	,, ,,	30
3.	**Nitrous Oxide—Oxygen—Ether Anaesthesia**	,, ,,	24
4.	**The Carbon Dioxide Absorption Technique**	Yvonne Fletcher	22
5.	**Endotracheal Anaesthesia**	Margaret Thomson	24
6.	**Intravenous Anaesthesia, Part I**	Yvonne Fletcher	30
7.	**Intravenous Anaesthesia, Part II**	,, ,,	25
8.	**Spinal Anaesthesia**	,, ,,	35
9.	**Resuscitation**	Rosanne Hunter	16
10.	**Operative Shock**	,, ,,	15
11.	**Handling and Care of the Patient**	,, ,,	25

The films were produced by John Taylor and photographed by A. E. Jeakins. They are distributed by the Central Film Library to specialised audiences only.

The primary requirements of the student of medicine, respecting his knowledge of the administration of anaesthetics, have been carefully considered in the preparation of this series of instructional films. Fundamental features of the induction of inhalational anaesthesia are accorded detailed attention. They are best demonstrated, as in films Nos. 1 and 2, during the administration of Open Drop Ether. The signs and differentiated stages of anaesthesia, as induction proceeds, are brought out convincingly, and the clearness of their demonstration cannot fail to stimulate the keen student to elicit them for himself in actual practice.

Open Drop Ether is comprehensive in essential technical details. Humorous treatment of the results of unintelligent methods of administering ether emphasises the several serious faults which must be avoided. A very helpful recapitulation of the major instructional points is included in the commentary.

Nitrous Oxide—Oxygen—Ether illustrates a method of anaesthesia with apparatus. By means of moving diagram and commentary the mechanical working of anaesthetic machines is lucidly explained. The regulated flow of nitrous oxide and oxygen from the cylinders to the flowmeters and through the apparatus to the patient, and the vaporisation of ether by the gases, is well shown diagrammatically. Fractional rebreathing, a feature which many students find difficult to understand, is made clear, as is also saturation of the tissues by the anaesthetic agent during the maintenance period.

The Carbon Dioxide Absorption Technique shows the physical and chemical processes taking place in closed anaesthesia with carbon dioxide absorption. Soda lime canisters, as used in single-phase and two-phase absorption techniques, are described and their working principle illustrated by excellent animation. The use of cyclopropane and the method of "controlled respiration" are also treated clearly.

Endotracheal Anaesthesia is the best example in this series of the great value of the film in teaching practical intricacies of technique. Endotracheal intubation, with which the film deals, is an important refinement of anaesthetic practice which, all too frequently, is badly performed by the anaesthetist. One showing of this film, with its excellent photography of the living anatomy of the larynx, its clear explanation by diagram of the exposure of the vocal cords by the laryngoscope and the introduction of a tube into the trachea, will eliminate most of the difficulties which the novice experiences in acquiring the technique and which his teacher has in describing it to him. The general excellence of this film is enhanced by the fact that in it future generations of anaesthetists will be able to see and hear one of the greatest contributors to progress in anaesthetics—I. W. Magill.

As befits a method which has acquired great popularity and importance during the recent years of war, the treatment of the two parts of *Intravenous Anaesthesia* is detailed and extensive. Close observation of the anaesthetised patient, a particularly important factor when intravenous drugs are employed, is so well emphasised throughout this film that the statement that the patient requires little or no attention after operation comes as an anti-climax and must be considered misleading to the inexperienced. The preparation of apparatus, technical points in venepuncture and the controlled injection of the anaesthetic agent are done thoroughly. Difficulties and dangers which may arise are well demonstrated and the ways of treating them are explicit. An omission here, however, is the danger which may arise from coughing or sneezing during certain ophthalmic operations performed under intravenous barbiturate anaesthesia. The scope of intravenous anaesthesia, a debatable field at present, is treated with commendable conservatism which will help to prevent the abuse of the method and protect its status as one of the best and safest methods of anaesthesia.

Spinal Anaesthesia (the more correct term, "analgesia", is slow in finding favour) deals with the subject adequately, in so far as the main principles underlying good technique are concerned. It does not, however, reach the high standard of the early films in the series in quality of performance, and leaves room for improvement.

Resuscitation is a short film, illustrating methods of resuscitation in cases of respiratory failure and cardiac arrest occurring during anaesthesia. In so far as it depicts all the resources of a well-equipped operating theatre and the skill of an experienced team of surgeons, anaesthetist and nurses coming into timely action, this film is good and serves a useful purpose. Respiratory failure and cardiac arrest, however, have a disconcerting habit of occurring more frequently in the field of minor surgery, in operations such as circumcision and tonsillectomy, and often in outpatient departments where facilities are poor and the medical staff junior and inexperienced. This

(*Continued at foot of opposite page*)

SHENVAL PRESS, LONDON AND HERTFORD

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

MAY–JUNE

CONTENTS

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CAN WE SEE OUR FEET?

SEVEN years ago there were four documentary units. Today there are dozens. Seven years ago there were few films to be made and limited distribution for those that were. Today there is an apparently unlimited demand for films, the biggest non-theatrical circuit in the world, and in some cases quite good theatrical distribution. With all this opulence around the place it might be a good idea to look if we can still see our shoes. In other words, what kind of films are being made? Are they useful films—do they help people?

The first thing that our bulging waist-band might obscure is that social documentary films like *Housing Problems*, *Enough to Eat?* and *The Harvest Shall Come* are diminishing in number instead of increasing with the increasing size of documentary. If you take a list of the films by practically any director of the past seven years, you will find few, if any, that are critical and outspoken. True, production has been under official supervision for seven years but there is an old saw about "wills" and "ways". There have been, of course, a mass of non-controversial instructional information propaganda films—films giving no headaches to the director or the unit. Films that would not endanger a unit getting more work from the same sponsor in the future. Films that make better returns financially.

Putting the thing in another way, our bulging waist-band obscures the fact that documentary is becoming more complacent in its approach to subjects. Take a film like *Children on Trial*. It tells the story of the rehabilitation of a boy and girl at approved schools. Its construction is not unlike an ordinary feature. The boy goes to the approved school, thinks that it is all a lot of nonsense. He runs away, is sent back and then for some odd reason sees the light. He reforms and becomes the pillar of the school. The same thing happens to the girl. The results obtained with these two children may be true of some who go through approved schools, but it is rather a lop-sided picture of the problem of juvenile rehabilitation.

The film does hint at some of the difficulties. The dormitories are unbelievably overcrowded. The boy who develops a liking for farming is sent back, at the end of the film, to the slums of Liverpool. But these are pretty vague hints and mean little to anyone who has no previous knowledge of the subject. Anyway the hints are so completely smothered by the success story of the film that they don't mean very much. *Children on Trial* gives the impression that approved schools are a complete answer to juvenile delinquency. Just send the children to them and get them back as little angels in a year or two's time.

It is unfair to pick on one film, because what can be said of this film can be said of nearly all the others. They all show an uncritical approach to their subjects. Maybe this comes from the over-use of experts who are usually involved personally in the subject. Whatever the reasons, the effect is bad.

Technicians cannot sit back and let someone else do their thinking for them. Seventy per cent of the work of a documentary producer or director or writer is the discriminating investigation of a subject —which doesn't mean acceptance and translation of the official point of view. It means becoming expert enough in the subject not to deliver a one-sided story.

The problem of course is deeper than a question of personal integrity. Fundamental questions of our relations with each other and with other countries are involved. Not so long ago, *D.N.L.* sharply reminded Robert Riskin, of the U.S. Office of War Information, of his responsibilities to world opinion when he forbade the export of certain American social documentaries. We must not find ourselves in the even weaker position of having no social documentaries to export. In short, are we prepared to share our experience with the world, believing ourselves strong enough in spirit and achievement not to fear an examination of our weaknesses? Or are we going to keep up a policy of shining a becoming pink light on our society, blanketing off everything which we dislike? The former policy will bring us world esteem. The latter will steer us back into British Council channels which, at least in terms of films, were often unpleasantly reminiscent of German propaganda in its pre-war heyday, and did untold damage to British world prestige into the bargain.

The position today is that documentary is on the one hand producing educational, instructive and descriptive films excellently and in large numbers, but on the other hand is neglecting the production of social documentaries. And the few that are being made are not as truthful as they might be.

Now that we have distribution—the best equipment there is to work with—continuity of production and employment—£17 a week instead of £5—in other words pleasant, comfortable and secure jobs, are we going to forget our aims of the past, forget the mess the world is in, and settle down to become business men, pedagogic educationalists or, as so many documentary technicians are doing these days, go into the entertainment business and make features? What are we most interested in—the big money, the glamour and the undeniable personal pleasure of making story films; or in making the kind of films that will help people—films like *Today We Live*, *Spanish A.B.C.*, *Behind the Spanish Lines*, *Housing Problems*, *The Harvest Shall Come*, *Four Hundred Million*, *Inside Nazi Germany*, *Inside Fascist Spain*?

FILMS FOR TOMORROW

An abridged version of a lecture delivered by Thomas Baird, Director of the Film Division of the British Information Services in America, to the Art Alliance of Philadelphia on April 9th, 1946

THERE is an important distinction to be made between the film which merely teaches a skill or bolsters up the curriculum, and the film which adds to our general knowledge and enriches our understanding of our day-to-day world. As an example of what I think is a good educational film, I can mention *Hydraulics*.* This is not a classroom film but it helps to explain an important basic principle. With similar explanations of similar topics, the day-to-day world in which we live would become more intelligible. We have need of this type of knowledge, factual and dispassionate, to help us to keep our bearings in a world growing ever more complex.

But factual and dispassionate knowledge is not enough for our day-to-day citizenship. We must extend our thinking to cover the problems of the world we live in, and I have chosen as the second film one entitled *Man—One Family*.† It discusses the German theory of race and shows its invalidity. This film, in contrast to the earlier one, can more properly be described as documentary, and it is important to examine the difference between the documentary and the educational film. It is of course a matter of emphasis and degree, purpose and intention. The educational film can be a classroom film to be used by a teacher as he would use blackboard and chalk, wall map or model. The teacher uses it as an illustration in teaching a curricular subject. Or an educational film can go beyond merely illustration, and can present an orderly exposition of an idea or a theory. On the other hand, the documentary film fulfils a purpose which, if educational, is not essentially a classroom or curricular problem. Its subject is the interpretation of the democratic process.

In the early twenties the critics of democracy were pointing out that democracy could be effective, indeed only might survive, if every citizen could comprehend his own participation in the job of government. Universal education has made the great majority of people competent to ask questions, and upon the Government's ability to answer these questions—to inform the public about the issues on which men will cast their votes and so help to govern their lives—the future of democracy largely depends. With this in mind, and in an attempt to create a dramatic shorthand which would not only record the life of the nation, but would enliven it in the minds of the people, the British Government adopted film as a means of communication. It was a way of discovering the national life.

We all know how much the economic and financial set-up of the motion-picture industry determines the content and style of its pictures. Documentary films achieved a certain freedom from this financial control, because they were made on a sponsorship basis and did not necessarily seek at the box office the recovery of production costs.

This business of Government films is, of course, suspect in many quarters, and before we go any further, we might look this problem straight in the face. Too long has the odium of Hitler's bludgeoning of the minds of the German people been allowed to mask the real significance of a Government information service—the real necessity to inform and give understanding to the community, whether that community is living at peace or at war.

During the war this special function of film, to discover and articulate our daily life and to illumine it with new thoughts, was greatly developed. It was a time when we saw many nations and many citizens take up their responsibilities; we saw men sail abroad to fight; we saw people who stayed at home and who did not run away either from the enemy or from their jobs or from their responsibilities; we saw people carry on their work or take on new jobs with a vigour and imagination unprecedented.

The war was fought well, not only with the sweat and toil of arms but in peoples' minds, because they knew a great deal about it. Radio, Press and films recorded and described the situation as no other event in history has been recorded before, and this was done while the battle still raged. But they did more, they pictured ideas—the ideas we fought for and also the ideas in the enemy's mind.

And now the problem will be the conduct of the peace, and it will matter little what we as individuals want of this world if we do not get peace and are prepared to settle merely for a cessation of hostilities. It could be argued, without much difficulty, that our record in the peace is not so good. We have brought liberation to two continents, but there are some who ask already have we brought food, have we brought efficiency, have we brought comfort, have we brought hope? If we fail to bring unity not only among the Allies but to all the liberated territories, Nazism may yet live in the hope that the world will turn again to its rejected New Order. Some say that there is little hope for the world unless there is new evidence of a profound belief among all the Allies, which we can share with the liberated countries, to prove that we can save the world for the right things and for the right way of life.

Looking back on the last peace it is easy to be wise after the event and to say that we failed because we did not know. This time it will be less easy to say that we do not know. Great new powers for explaining the problems and the jobs to be done are to hand. To have an idea of how powerful and effective they are, we have only to look at what we have done in the war.

In Britain, we have seen the Government take up the challenge to tell the people what the war was about and what was required of people in their everyday citizenship. We have seen the Government conscious enough of its stewardship to explain its actions and explain what wartime citizenship demanded. This was done not only in the magnificent words of the Prime Minister and not only on the floor of the House of Commons but in more humble ways, in pamphlets and booklets, in the Press and on the radio and in films. In the United States we have seen the War Department conscious of its obligations to a citizen army. We have seen film after excellent film come out to explain to the soldier what the war was about and to tell the public what the Army was doing.

Many examples could be given of how in both our countries the Governments and the official organisations have described the battles and the victories. For the first time in history, through such a film as *Desert Victory*, the people of many nations could follow and understand the fight as it was being fought. This is a remarkable and unprecedented fact, and we should remember that the Battle of Waterloo was fought and won three days before anyone in London knew. But it is a spectacular example and not the most important one. There are many humble films which have played as important a part.

When the war came to England all of us were required to learn a new citizenship. All of us had to learn how to keep alive and how to get along in an island bombarded by the enemy and threatened with invasion. Many films were made and shown to the whole cinema-

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* See *D.N.L.* Vol. II, No. 2, p. 28.

† See *D.N.L.* Vol. VI, No. 52, p. 24. Ironically, the C.O.I. is not allowed to send this film to Europe. Perhaps some members of the Foreign Office are themselves upholders of the racial heresies the film seeks to uproot.

going public. There were films to teach people the pattern of their new citizenship and of their new way of life. We had to learn how to do the blackout, how to build the shelter, how to care for our gas masks, how to protect our children's health and how to make the best of spam. At the same time, portable projectors were sent out to factory workers in the lunch-hour break at noon and midnight, to the mining villages in the valleys of Wales, to farms in East Anglia, to shipbuilding yards on the Clyde and to the smallholders in the Hebrides. In this way, people who would normally have been remote from the danger areas identified themselves with every fighter in the island or overseas. We saw being created in our hands a new, vast and important instrument in the public's education.

The peace calls again for every organisation to take up the challenge and assume its responsibility. It won't matter much if we don't have every instructional film telling us how to drive a car or how to cook a steak, if there are no cars or steaks. It will matter very much if the people of the democratic countries, the people of the United Nations, fail to recognise the challenge which still faces the peace-loving nations. But if every organisation in its particular field will teach, and teach, and teach, the important issues which will come before men's judgment and will devote all their energy to the discussion of these issues as they appear in their own specialised fields, we may yet bring the democratic idea into all men's minds and purge from their thinking for all time the diabolical idea which Hitler had for a brief period dangled before men's eyes.

So let us get rid once and for all of this bogy of propaganda. Call it what you will, an information service which creates in men's minds and hearts a feeling of responsibility and citizenship is a necessity in any State which could be democratic, and better that the task should fall to the artists than to the politicians. Our artists must create and enliven the world for us all, or we shall be the poorer.

Several hundreds of films were made in Britain better to acquaint her citizens with the democratic ideals for which they were fighting. Similar films were made in considerable numbers in America. When Europe began to be liberated, films were ready to be shown, to give the liberated peoples their first glimpse of truth after many dark years. The film *Man—One Family*, which we are going to see tonight, was one of these films. It was to be expected that after years of German occupation German ideas would at least have some currency on the liberated territories and so this film was made to disabuse any minds infected by German ideas and to reinforce the minds of free men in the democratic truth.

The future of documentary films seems to lie mainly in the hands of governments. In Britain, the Government has decided to continue to produce documentary films to promote discussion and also at times to point directions in the trying days of a post-war reconstruction. The Ministry of Information has now passed out of existence as public expositor of current ideas and problems and its place has been taken by the Central Office of Information, which has already scheduled some 200 films for production.

It is natural at this time, in looking to the future to imagine the United Nations Organisation utilising film. It is presumed that UNESCO will endeavour to secure the circulation of many films throughout the world and perhaps to produce its own films on international problems. Here lies one of our greatest hopes for the future. It is presumably UNO's job to keep the peace, but that is not enough. The absence of war does not guarantee any more brotherhood in the world. Knowledge of other nations is essential if the democratic ideal is to have world currency. We can no longer rely on our purely national ideals; we must have access to the ideals, intentions and aspirations of other countries and it is hoped that UNESCO will be able to circulate films emanating from many countries, so that all of us may have the benefit of a variety of points of view. Given access to many diverse opinions and to the many different national ideals throughout the world, we shall have a freer air in which to develop the Truth and the Peace.

NOTES OF THE MONTH

"The Irresponsibles"

FROM our colleagues across the Atlantic comes a spirited 2,000 words in *The Screen Writer*. Karl Schlichter, director of radio education for the Los Angeles County Tuberculosis and Health Association, asks of script writers in particular, and of the film industry in general, whether they should not consider more seriously their responsibility to the cinema-going public when story subjects touch on public health and hygiene.

After referring to the successful use of *Dr. Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* (including 16 mm. screening in the educational field) he mentions that *A Song to Remember* evaded the issue of naming Chopin's affliction—tuberculosis. Most of the article deals with the perpetuation of an unenlightened outlook, as portrayed in *The Bells of St. Mary's*, through the misguided artistry of Bing Crosby and Ingrid Bergman. While in no way advocating "dull interjections of medical treatises into standard movie fare", he asks what good reason there is "for rejecting an opportunity for social content when it can in no way impede dramatic construction".

Arizona, the film leads one to suppose, has the dry kind of climate to which T.B. afflicted Americans should resort; yet American doctors devote much time to replacing this myth with sounder, positive doctrine. It is meet, the film suggests, that the deserving spirit of the good Sister (Ingrid Bergman) should not be burdened with the knowledge that she has tuberculosis; yet it is cardinal that the patient should be aware he or she has the disease. The film reckons it not unseemly that "the motivation of the good Sister's entire life, her love of children" should find greatest tragedy in that she will be sent away from her charges—not that they may have become infected with her bacilli! The author suggests that scripting on these lines is the work of "irresponsibles". Yet it was not irresponsible film writers who helped crystallise the right attitudes for winning World War II. During that same war 206,000 people died from T.B. alone. "Draw your own balance sheet," he ends.

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Films in Schools

A CONFERENCE was held on May 20th, at the Ministry of Education, over which Miss Ellen Wilkinson presided, to discuss the development of films and other visual methods in the schools. Representatives of the several associations of Local Education Authorities and teachers were present, together with members of the Central Office of Information and of various sections of the film industry.

It was agreed that the teachers themselves should establish a committee, with which the Ministry would be associated, to draw up programmes of films required for educational purposes. Production arrangements will be made through another committee to be set up by the Ministry, upon which the Ministry itself, teachers and film makers will be represented. This Committee will work with the C.O.I.

THE CENTRAL COUNCIL FOR SCHOOL BROADCASTING

By FLORA MEADEN, Assistant Education Officer of the C.C.S.B., which has often been mentioned in discussions on the educational film. This article describes the manner in which the Council collects data on which to base its policy, and suggests some aspects of this work which may be of interest to the makers of educational films.

THE C.C.S.B. was set up and is financed by the B.B.C. It is composed of representatives of the principal educational organisations and certain members nominated by the B.B.C. The power of fashioning the policy behind school broadcasting has been delegated to it. It thus has a more positive function than a merely Advisory Committee. So that it may carry out its task, the B.B.C. provides it with a paid secretariat. As well as a headquarters staff in London, there are Education Officers in the B.B.C. regions. The School Broadcasting Department of the B.B.C. interprets the policy laid down by the Council and is responsible for the detailed educational planning of broadcasts for schools. If an Advisory Council for Visual Education were set up, perhaps a rough parallel might be drawn between film units or companies commissioned to carry out its policy and School Broadcasting Department. On the other hand, it is interesting to notice that there is, in general, an important difference between the training and background of the technicians who have in the past produced educational films and the programme assistants responsible for making school broadcasts. These programme assistants—who handle the detailed planning of series, who brief script writers, edit scripts for the appropriate age-range and so forth—have most of them worked as university or school teachers and have afterwards learned the craft of broadcasting. With few exceptions film technicians have never had this direct experience of the classroom.

The policy-making of school broadcasting is thus a direct responsibility of the educational world through its representatives on the Council, while the building of school broadcasts is to a great extent in the hands of people with practical experience of teaching, as well as of radio.

ASSESSMENT OF RESULTS

The Council determines policy through its Executive Committee and its Programme Committees. The members of Programme Committees are teachers invited because of their experience of the medium, together with subject specialists from universities, training colleges and the Ministry of Education. All teachers who sit on these committees handle in their classrooms the series of broadcasts which are their special concern. As well as providing information to supplement such direct contact as programme assistants have with schools and teachers, it is part of the work of the permanent staff of the Council to provide these committees with evidence on which to base their decisions.

Within the limitations imposed by the war, methods of collecting evidence on school broadcasts have been developed steadily, and are being further developed. At first sight, the problem of collecting this evidence may seem to be entirely different from the assessment of educational films. Broadcasting is an ephemeral medium, more elusive to study than the film. A broadcast takes place "in time"; broadcasts run in series side by side with the teachers' lessons in the term's course. Though scripts, and in a few cases recordings, continue to exist, once transmission is over the moment cannot be recalled. Nevertheless, however different the natures of the two media, the purpose of both is the same—to help the schools. This being so it is reasonable to suppose that there will be certain similarities between the sorts of evidence they both need to discover.

THE L.E.A.s

It is equally necessary for both to enlist the willing co-operation of the education authorities and the teachers. From the early days of school broadcasting, the Education Officers of the Council have worked with the co-operation of L.E.A.s and teachers who have always most courteously welcomed their visits to schools. They have wide contacts with teachers, officials and local opinion generally, and spend an important part of their time in the schools listening to broadcasts with children. They are thus observers experienced in watching the effect of broadcasts "on the spot". Like the reporting teachers, whom I describe below, they listen, so far as it lies in their power as adults, "through the ears" of children.

COLLECTION OF EVIDENCE

The regular collection of evidence on school broadcasts was begun in rudimentary fashion very early in the history of the medium. One of the longest established sources of information is the Council's panel of reporting teachers. At present approximately 15-20 teachers, specially invited because of their experience of the medium, report each week on each series of broadcasts—which means that about 400 reports are received every week by the Council from 350 teachers who handle broadcasts in the classroom. These teachers work on blank postcards assisted by brief notes sent to them at the beginning of term. The function of these weekly reports is to provide immediate reaction for those planning the broadcasts and thus to take the place of the visible audience which the broadcaster lacks. The reports give valuable information on detailed points of production, on the response of children with a known background and on the methods by which known teachers use individual broadcasts to illustrate their teaching. That broadcasting takes place within a limited band of time would seem to make it more difficult to study than the film. But out of this very difficulty, I believe, comes one of the advantages of the panel, namely, that teachers who report must listen, if they are to do so at all, in their classrooms with children present. "From the life" reporting of this kind has had so far, as I understand, very little influence on the development of educational films. "Appraisal Panels" of teachers who meet after school hours to assess films may provide useful opinion, but in the study of broadcasting it has been found by long experience that the reaction of the adult listening alone is likely to be different from that of the adult listening "through the ears" of children.

Yet another source of information are teachers' conferences and meetings of all kinds held both in the regions and in London to discuss particular problems of school broadcasting, e.g. the future of "News Commentary" now that the war is over. These opportunities for officials and teachers to meet and discuss have been most illuminating and suggest a promising line of development for the future.

Conferences of this kind, like reports from the panel and the observations of Education Officers, do not give representative evidence in the statistical sense, but from all three sources comes information which helps to bring statistical findings to life. Certain information to guide the making of policy must be collected on a large scale so that a reliable picture of the audience may be built up. Approximately 13,000 schools in England, Wales and N. Ireland are registered users of school broadcasts and there are 1,300 schools on the register of the Scottish Council for School Broadcasting. It is known from investigation that few schools listen without registering, since the Councils' registers provide mailing lists for essential publications. The registers were the first source of information about schools which used radio, and today they provide the basis for statistical enquiry into questions of fact about the audience. The following are typical questions to which answers are required. What types of school listen to each series? What is the age and intelligence composition of the audience for each series? Do the schools listen regularly each week or less often? What sort of syllabus is commonly followed in a subject and what relation have the broadcasts to it? From answers to questions such as these it is possible to build a picture which shows how far a series of broadcasts is finding the audience for which it was intended. This evidence is an important factor in determining future plans.

SAMPLING

To discover the answers to such questions the Council uses ordinary sampling methods which have been developed in the last few years on the advice of a statistical expert. A random sample of approximately 500 (the size is adjusted to the purpose) is taken of the potential audience for the series to be investigated (i.e. of all listening

schools of the type and containing children of the age for which the series is planned). The schools in this sample are circularised with a questionnaire designed to bring in the required information. The Council has no official "right" to ask for information from schools, and it is therefore an entirely voluntary gesture on the part of the teacher to fill in and return this questionnaire. In the last few years teachers have been spending a notorious amount of time filling in forms. They have nevertheless been most generous in their response to these circularisations. For the 10 "postal surveys" made by the Council in 1945 the returns were in most cases 80 per cent or more of the sample. From these returns it is possible to draw conclusions concerning the whole potential audience within a known degree of probability.

An example will serve to show the kind of background picture for school broadcasting which the postal survey helps to create. A survey was made to examine the use of the Geography series of 1944/45. This series was planned for children of about 13 in what were then called elementary schools. The sample of schools included all types of elementary school with children of 13, but no grammar schools. The following is a brief summary of the results. It was calculated that the most probable number of schools using the series in the potential audience of 7,200 was about 4,000, with about 40 per cent of these listening regularly. The number of children listening was in the region of 150,000 and these were distributed fairly evenly over all three years of the senior age-range, i.e. 11 plus to 13 plus, and organised mostly in classes of mixed intelligence. The Geography syllabus for any one school was as likely to deal with any *one* part of the world as any *other* at *any* point of the senior age-range and likely, too, to cover two or more continents in a single year. The Geography teaching (including the use of the broadcast) took place as a rule within 80 minutes a week. It follows that a Geography series on any particular region of the world might find (as far as the choice is dictated by subject matter) an audience anywhere between the first and third years of the secondary modern school and in the corresponding part of the unreorganised school. As may be seen from the evidence, the Geography series for 1944/45 did in fact find an audience of this wide age-range. It would therefore seem that two courses lie open: *either* to emphasise to teachers, that although younger children may listen, the broadcasts are planned to suit the needs of 13-year-olds *or* to attempt to plan broadcasts suitable for all children between 11 plus and 13 plus. It is known from much experience that a series intended specially for 13-year-olds must be designed and presented differently from one intended for the whole senior age-range. The latter is less easy to provide. The differences in outlook and intellectual capacity of the listening classes must be kept in mind from the earliest stages of making a broadcast. Here is perhaps a point for film makers to consider. Though the teaching film is a more expensive and less flexible instrument than the school broadcast, close investigation into the suitability of teaching films may show a similar need for fine adjustments to age level.

The development of these methods of collecting evidence has, as I mentioned earlier, been limited by the war. But it is hoped by this method of sampling to build a large-scale picture of the listening habits of the audience, which as far as it is possible to find out, shall be reasonably accurate. This picture is confined to certain background details of fact which can be investigated by post and is always a little out of date. There have still to be devised means of forecasting and striking a balance between the needs of sections of the audience during the period of change foreshadowed by the Education Act. *Ad hoc* study in the classroom by teachers and officials already provides lively information for those making the broadcasts, and offers an interesting field for further development, and there are possibilities, so far little explored, of detached research under controlled conditions which it is hoped may before long be conducted, perhaps in universities. But whatever may be the future growth of research in the field of school broadcasting, it cannot be emphasised too strongly that there is one essential on which depends the whole structure—the active co-operation of the teaching profession. This will be true as well for research into teaching films.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF FILMS PRODUCED BY THE M.O.I. IN 1945

FOOTAGE OF FILMS

	1940(*a*)	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	TOTAL
Five-minute	13,791	25,113	20,141	—	—	—	59,045
Fifteen-minute	—	—	1,316	15,216	16,041	14,832	47,405
General T Distribution	16,673	9,228	22,506	33,833	17,524	31,165	130,929
General NT Distribution	23,545	7,890	41,457	24,010	39,572	55,216	191,690
Instructional and Training	4,109	10,280	30,552	38,568	18,713	17,850	120,072
Mainly Overseas	—	—	16,383	15,081	5,908	6,179	43,551
Wholly Overseas	3,100	11,093	22,944	43,115	17,307	8,413	105,972
Trailers	1,600	3,000(*b*)	4,250(*e*)	5,750(*c*)	5,500(*c*)	4,625	20,100
TOTAL	62,818	66,604	159,519	175,613	120,565	138,280	723,399
Colonial Film Unit(*d*)	11,919	7,836	13,600	13,198	17,844	33,107	97,504
Acquired 5-minute and 15-minute films	1,135	6,657	11,353	1,312	—	887	21,344

(*a*) Includes 3,130 ft. of T. Releases delivered in 1939. (*b*) Average length—200 ft. (*c*) Average length—125 ft.
(*d*) 16 mm. productions calculated at equivalent 35 mm. length.

NUMBER OF FILMS

	1940(*a*)	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	TOTAL
Five-minute	20	37	29	—	—	—	86
Fifteen-minute	—	—	1	12	12	12	37
General T Distribution	14	5	7	8	5	8	47
General NT Distribution	23	7	35	21	28	39	153
Instructional and Training	6	12	24	27	13	12	94
Mainly Overseas	—	—	12	7	6	2	27
Wholly Overseas	3	10	18	39	15	6	91
Trailers	8	15	34	46	51	37	191
TOTAL	74	86	160	160	130	116	762
Colonial Film Unit	8	10	16(*b*)	30(*b*)	36(*b*)	30(*b*)	130
Acquired 5-minute and 15-minute films	2	10	17	1	—	1	31

(*a*) Includes 2 films for T release delivered in 1939. (*b*) Including productions in 16 mm.

THE CZECHOSLOVAK FILM INDUSTRY

Contributed by JIRI WEISS, who established a Czechoslovak unit in Britain in the war, and who has now returned home

WHEN signing the decree nationalising the resources of the Czechoslovak cine-industry, Dr. Benes said, "If anything in this country is ripe for nationalisation, it is the cinema." The decree involved four studios with twenty well-equipped stages, laboratories and some 2,200 cinemas. About 22,000 technicians—from film directors to projectionists—were concerned.

The reasons for nationalisation were clear and understandable even to those who did not hold socialist views. Before the war, Czechoslovakia had 2,200 cinemas—a large number for a country of 14,000,000. While providing an excellent market for foreign films distributed in subtitled versions, Czechoslovakia was unable properly to support home-produced films. At the best, a box-office success earned only 1,000,000 crowns in 1938—just over £7,000 sterling at pre-war values!—so films had to be made very cheaply indeed if they were to earn profits. To support better home productions, an import tax on foreign films was introduced. The revenues were used to subsidise those films which had artistic or educational value but would not be likely to be box-office attractions. A special board was set up to handle this scheme, and so some measure of "direction" was visible in the Czechoslovak cinema even before the war. At their peak, Czech studios produced some 35-40 feature films per year. Production was very speculative. In spite of this, a few pictures of quality were produced, such as *Extase* by Machaty, *Young Love* by Rovensky and *Death and the Dictator* by Hugo Haas. But these were exceptions, and though Czech films were fairly well distributed in central Europe, they could not compete with Hollywood's technical virtuosity or France's artistic depth and qualities.

Before the German occupation, the owner of the biggest Prague studios had both started his own production units and bought several cinemas. Thus the Czechoslovak film-industry had already started on the path followed by the U.S. and British industries, by which the small operators are swallowed by the big, and the film industry controlled by huge vertical concerns. The Germans speeded up this process, partly by pressure and confiscation, partly by infiltration. German companies opened branches in Prague and expanded the existing plant, for the city was relatively bomb-free where German studios were disturbed by Allied raids.

The Czechs defended themselves as best as they could, clinging to their own units and forming underground resistance committees. In 1941 one of these cells, centred around the noted novelist Vladislav Vancura, was unearthed by the Nazis and its leaders shot. It would be wrong, of course, to suppose that all Czech film-technicians and artistes were heroes. The Germans used not only terror, but also gold. And they knew how to use it cunningly, so that many surrendered, though others refused up to the last even to speak a word of German or to collaborate in any way in Nazi productions.

Victory found not only Czechoslovakia's production units intact, but also a leadership ready to take over. The German orgy of centralisation, forcing the Czechs to form a so-called "Film Centre" (a kind of Fascist *Chambre de Cinéma*), proved a boon to those who desired not only a centralised but also a nationalised film industry. Indeed, even with the best will in the world, it would have been impossible to unscramble the deals made under German pressure and to return to the *status quo*. Besides, the Germans left behind a hugely expanded plant. Who would be the owner? That is why it was clear that the only solution would be complete nationalisation. Only, as there was no precedent, nobody knew what form such nationalisation should take.

To bridge the interim period, Mr. Kopecky, Czechoslovak Minister of Information, formed Councils of Plenipotentiaries, the majority of whom had been members of the underground committees mentioned above. These councils ruled in the period before the formation of an entirely independent Czechoslovak Film Corporation.* For a few months there were plenipotentiaries for production, distribution and import-export. A special plenipotentiary for finance acted as a film bank, granting money for new productions, collecting monies from cinemas and auditing the accounts of all other departments.

Even in this preparatory stage, the industry was largely independent and was operated, not by the Ministry of Information, but by its own experts. Its economy was strictly on a basis of profit and loss. It was to have no subsidy, and all investments in films and cinemas had to be made from existing income. The Films Division of the Ministry of Information had—and still has—a supervising function only.

The fact that all income—even the exhibitor's share of foreign pictures—flowed into a common fund for the first time, gave the industry a chance to produce pictures of quality, for the question of profit and loss on an individual picture was less important than the overall position. The whole pattern of the industry as seen today is comparable to the Rank empire or to the huge U.S. corporations which embrace production, distribution and exhibition. But in Czechoslovakia all takings are applied only to the production of better films or to the building or re-opening of cinemas.

Now for that most important question which worries creative workers in the cinema. In a nationalised film industry can there be freedom for the artist to say whatever he likes in whatever way he wishes? In Czechoslovakia there has been, so far, more freedom for the artist than in the former privately owned companies. Today all questions of film policy are decided by a special "artistic board", which is composed of various elements with various political opinions, so that dictatorial decisions are out of question. The prevailing trend is to produce pictures of high artistic quality and good entertainment value together with a certain proportion of propaganda films—about a fourth of the total output. Party politics are banned, and an eye is kept on the box office, for the industry has to keep itself alive by its own income.

On the whole, the reborn industry seems to be shaping well, though it still has its teething troubles. As everywhere else, the film industry in Czechoslovakia is a difficult body to organise, and there were several still-born children. One of those is the Film Council which it was thought would become the supreme organ of the industry, a sort of film parliament where all major issues were to be decided. Also, the functions of the various boards are not yet clearly defined.

Production proper is now in the hands of two production units, each headed by an able and keen producer. Here there is furious competition, each group trying to get the best directors, writers and cameramen, and the best studio-bookings. This competition went so far that floor-space had to be forcibly divided according to the production programme of the two groups.

In 1946, the Czechoslovak industry hopes to produce 15-20 features and some 40 documentaries, though the plans are hampered, not only by lack of personnel, but also by lack of film-stock. The only large supplies have so far come from the U.S.S.R. The British and French have sent in only a trickle.

The Soviet productions now being made in Prague are produced on a strictly commercial basis. The Soviet film organisation has hired, by a yearly contract, a few stages in which to produce a certain number of films as their own stages have been destroyed. The French, who also negotiated for floor-space, found the costs too high. (This statement will help to dispel the fairy-tale of Soviet "occupation" of Czech studios. The Czech industry will gladly hire available stages to any foreign company desiring to produce in Prague.)

* Set up in April, 1946, by a decree of the Minister of Information, to concentrate and operate all resources of the industry.

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NEW NON-THEATRICAL FILMS

Children on Trial. *Production*: Crown. *Producer*: Basil Wright. *Director*: Jack Lee. *Camera*: Chick Fowle. 65 mins.

This film is a sequel to *Children of the City* and it tells the story of a boy and girl who are sent to approved schools. Technically the film is well made, capably directed and photographed, but not so capably produced. It is much too long, which is usually considered to be the producer's affair; it is also slow and badly timed, which might be said to be the editor's.

Children on Trial is very similar to *Children of the City*. It approaches approved schools uncritically and presents them at their best: sympathetic masters, relatively good conditions, interesting work and the successful rehabilitation of children.

The film will be as successful as its predecessor, but both of them suffer because they do not present the whole story.

Juvenile delinquency (that unimaginative J.P.'s phrase) is a big and real problem, and it is a problem—which means no answer has yet been found. But these films imply that it has been solved by avoiding the difficulties of the full-story. True they present the children as human beings and not gorillas—which is valuable, but the real film of the problem of juvenile delinquency is still waiting to be made.

Science Joins an Industry. *Production:* Data for the Cotton Board. *Producer*: Donald Alexander. *Director*: James Hill. 20 mins.

This film shows the evolution of cotton spinning from the hand loom operated in humble cottages to the almost human machinery and massive industry represented by the giant mills of Lancashire today. We are shown the birth of Shirley House where the laboratories of the cotton industry were established in the face of a certain amount of apathy and scepticism in the industry itself, and the film succeeds admirably in demonstrating the intricate process of cotton production with its many fields of scientific research. Technically it achieves a high standard but its purpose seems a little vague—science is so firmly entrenched today in every branch of human life that it requires little advocacy, and the film's attempt to deal with the industry's basic economic problems is apparent rather than real. However, it is presumed that the general purpose will become clearer when the remainder of the series is shown. Nevertheless, the film leaves a final impression that, however much we may have been supplanted by competitors in other industries, we can at least maintain our pre-eminent position as a supplier of cotton goods to the world, and from this point of view the film will serve an admirable purpose for overseas distribution.

The Education of the Deaf. *Production:* Data Films for the British Council. *Director:* Jack Ellitt. *Camera*: Wolfgang Suschitzky. *Distributor*: C.F.L. 45 mins.

Subject: Lip reading and speech training for the deaf and partially deaf in special schools.

Treatment: Deafness brings a physical isolation, which is difficult for those with hearing to understand. A family group, in which the mother is partially deaf, listening to the ninth symphony of Beethoven establishes an analogy with the composer, and by implication the moral that the handicaps of deafness can be overcome. Rather less surely various types of deafness in children and adults are illustrated, and some of the methods used to determine the degree of hearing loss are shown. This is the weakest part of the film; the viewer tends to get confused by being shown a number of children, without it being very clear what they are being used to illustrate, and some cases, during their tests, appeared to be able to hear more than one had been led to expect. The consequences of deafness from birth without special training could well have been more strongly emphasised. When the film moves on to show how lip reading and speech training are carried out in schools for the deaf and partially deaf, all traces of uncertainty disappear. The sequences showing the gradual education of deaf children first to form the correct sounds, then to associate those sounds with objects, and finally how to interpret new and complicated meanings from lip movements and in turn translate them into the right words are some of the most absorbing scenes of this type that have been shown on the screen. The camera work here has a visual beauty, which in many places is profoundly moving, and the direction a sympathy and sureness of touch, resulting in a unity of sound and picture which is all too rare. The film ends with a dialogue in which a woman who has been deaf from birth takes part. Her speech and understanding, as well as the story of her life, are conclusive evidence of the value of the training shown in the film. If the film has any defect, it is that it tries to cover too much ground. The length could with advantage have been reduced by pruning the earlier parts, and it is to be hoped that the use of well-known symphonies as background music, though here very effective, will not become a common practice.

Audience value: The film is surprisingly directed to specialised audiences, but it is difficult to understand what specialised audience the producers had in mind. Most specialised audiences would hardly need to be sold on the value of special training, and would want more precise factual information on points where the film is vague, for example on the relative value of hearing aids for the partially deaf. It appears to the reviewer that this film is of first-rate instructional and informational value to all types of general adult audiences, and it is to be hoped that it will get a wide showing on this basis. As a medium for enlisting sympathy and understanding for the problems of the deaf, and for showing the methods available today for their training, it has a universal appeal.

The Sunny Tribe. *Production:* Voentekhfilm Studios. 1945. *Distributor*: S.C.R. 38 mins.

This film presents the life-cycle and habits of the honey-bee in considerable detail. Queen, larva, drones, stages of worker development, and swarming are all described and shown in a model hive which closely simulates natural conditions. This film is remarkable on two counts; firstly, the bees and their queen show no camera-consciousness (and anyone who has tried to photograph a queen-bee knows how fast she moves when exposed to light); and secondly, the large-scale close-ups are superb. The sequence showing one cell in longitudinal section being filled by a worker is a beautiful demonstration of surface-tension effects, and another memorable shot shows the screen filled by a single cell in top view, with the newly hatched worker biting its way out.

The Island of White Birds. *Production:* Mosfilm Studios. 1939. *Distributor*: S.C.R. 28 mins.

This film presents the nesting habits of a large colony of gulls. The responsibilities of the male and female during nesting and fledgling stages are shown, and the reaction of the birds to experimental interferences, such as moving the nest, substitution of eggs for fledglings, and of dummy eggs for real ones is studied.

This film and *The Sunny Tribe* carry one stage further the trend discernible in those Russian popular science films that have recently been brought to Britain—a move towards more factual presentation of life cycles and life habits, a move away from broad ecology on a superficial plane towards more detailed study of one organism. At the same time the approach is becoming more experimental: we are shown what scientists do to investigate the behaviour of animals, and how the animals respond—the gulls' eggs were deliberately tampered with—and yet in such a way that it does not seem a complete answer. We are left wondering what would happen if some other experiment had been tried: suppose the gull fledgling had been replaced not by an egg of that species, but by a fledgling of another species? A scientific curiosity is aroused by these films. Moreover these films are designed also to evoke patriotism in the Russian audiences and respect for the progress the Russians are making.

The Russian animal-life films all present another message as well. Each film has contained one or more fights, not put in for their spectacular value or even to satisfy the sadists in the audience. The bees eject marauders by stinging, and two queen-bees are seen battling to a death; the gulls fight off another gull invading their territory. So the audiences learn not only to admire their country and their scientists, but also that if they are to keep what they have they must fight for it, and be prepared to fight to the death.

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,

Some of your reviewer's comments on the work of the Exeter Visual Education Centre are such as to imply a lack of wisdom and of knowledge let alone charity. To deride for failure "to get results" in research is surely unwise in any case and especially here, for Meredith's work as Lecturer in Visual Education was (until this year) all done in addition to a full-time teaching job in the College. The initiation of a Regional Library at Dartington, the courses for teachers, the information distributed, the research done in schools, the films shown and what is more imponderable but very useful, the interest widely aroused, represent an amount of spare-time work which deserves commendation from your reviewer and especially as it has been done away from the stimulating contacts of London.

RONALD MACKEITH

THE CINÉASTES

by Oswell Blakeston

WHEN talkies first began to whisper, a great many of us knew that our days were numbered. We were the cinéastes, the people who made independent films because we loved cinema rather than because we wanted to make money. There were cinéastes in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, New York. We tried to make highbrow pictures, and we were often pretentious. But the things we were trying to say in film needed saying, if only as an over-emphasis to place against the crudities of commercial cinema. We made short abstract films, which were like a painter's still-life composition put into motion, we made films which were dreams. And though our films only reached small and special audiences, we managed to contribute to the technique of cinema. Yes, you will find our names in the books devoted to the history of cinema.

But the talkies, we knew, would cook our financial goose. We worked with a fine margin of profit over loss. The extra expense of sound recording would make it impossible for us to carry on. So, of course, a great many of us, up to the last minute, tried to pretend that the fatal day would not come. We used to say, "I think we ought to listen a little more to silence". Carl Freund, the unrivalled cameraman of the golden era of Ufa pictures, said to me: "Think of the horses in a sound film. Horses won't refrain from doing all they're told not to."

Perhaps you will see the substance of a cinéaste more clearly if I tell you about one or two of my own films. There was, for instance, *Light Rhythms*. This short picture, which I made with Francis Bruguière, was an attempt to photograph light itself, and not just objects in light. We drew beams of light, intensifying them at will, across paper surfaces or surfaces in relief, and we rewound and rewound the same film in the camera until, by multiple exposures, we had completed the moving patterns in light.

We made this picture with a camera we bought in a junk shop. It was quite unsuited to trick work and would only take small lengths of film. Often, at the end of a day, it would burst open and throw the whole day's work to ruin on the floor. There was a cheap demon in it. But when it was finished, Stuart Davis booked *Light Rhythms* for the Shaftesbury Avenue Pavilion (the Academy of its day) and afterwards it went to the Tivoli. Provincial towns demanded this film which was made without actors and scenery, and which featured only light. The *Manchester Guardian* said: "At one flight it leaves all other advanced films behind." Copies went to New York, South America, Barcelona, Berlin, Paris.

After *Light Rhythms*, I went to Switzerland to make a film to shock the *avant-garde*. When it was shown in Paris, an infuriated diehard hurled his seat through the screen. Real success!

This picture was supposed to be pictorial film criticism. Just as pictorial journalism is shown in the news-reels, I wanted to outline a future for pictorial film criticism, to take its place in the news theatres. I tried to epitomise a lot of current stupidities; for example the superficial use of symbols visually alike but essentially different. The scene which caused the riot. . . . Well, you know how a film-fan identifies herself (or himself) with the heroine (or hero) in the drama? Actors in my film were shown dissociating themselves from the audience and leaving the cinema in disgust.

Two things happened while I was in Switzerland which I think are worth noting. One: I discovered a back-street cinema which still had the mechanism to rock the floor of the theatre during sea pictures. Two: a Continental film comedian went up the mountains, played his accordion and brought down an avalanche.

The most important part of my Swiss picture was that Edmund Meisel wrote music for it. Meisel was *the* composer of scores for silent films. At the Taunstein Palast, Meisel conducted an orchestra of seventy—including a jazz band, six tuba players and a group of musicians with quarter tone instruments—for the opening night of Walter Ruttman's *Berlin*. The film was the story of a day in a great city, and the music told that story. The musicians were distributed throughout the theatre, in the balconies, under the roof—everywhere. At moments of climax, the audience had the sensation of being drowned by sound. When the spectators left the theatre, there was no break in continuity. Members of the audience paused at the corner of the street and said, "This is exactly what the director and the composer were doing."

Had Meisel lived, he might have done remarkable things for the sound film. He was experimenting, just before his death, with light rays photographed directly on the sound track. He thought, by means of the beams, he could record an orchestra without musicians. Since Meisel's day, the creator of a cartoon film has drawn frog noises directly on the sound track. A technician spent a hundred hours drawing the sound track of four words. But nobody has done what Meisel wanted to do—produced music of a kind that has never been heard before.

Well, Meisel seems to have landed us in Berlin. The outstanding cinéaste of Berlin was Lotte Reiniger. Perhaps you remember her silhouette films—black animated lace? They were world famous in their day. Lotte herself was built on gencrous lines with a wonderful deep laugh. Quite the wrong type, one would think, for making exquisitely delicate films. Later on, when Hitler ordered the professional women of Germany to parade before him in their unions, Lotte marched alonc carrying a sign: LOTTE REINIGER BUND. After that, escape was a matter of hours. When she fled to London, I met her. "Good God," she said in her deep voice, "when do the bloody pubs open?"

But Paris, of course, was the real centre of cinéastes. There were A. Cavalcanti, E. Deslaw, Edmund Greville, Jean Renoir, René Clair,

(*Continued on page* 42)

TWO FEATURE DOCUMENTARIES

Land of Promise. *Production*: Films of Fact. *Director*: Paul Rotha. *Associate Director*: Francis Gysin. *Distribution*: Film Traders Ltd. 70 mins.

Personnel Selection—Officers. *Production*: Shell Film Unit for M.O.I. *Production Consultants*: Film Centre. *Director*: Geoffrey Bell. *Camera*: Sidney Beadle. *Diagrams*: Frank Rodker. *Distribution*: C.F.L. 1 hour, 40 mins.

BOTH THESE films run to feature length, but that is their only point of similarity. In all other respects they represent two poles of documentary technique, the one demagogic, the other pedagogic. Indeed, both of them have the faults of their merits. *Land of Promise*, in its enthusiasm, lands, at one or two points, too neatly on to its demagogic pole; while *Personnel Selection—Officers* rejoices at times too obviously in its pedagogic purities. Nevertheless, each film is an object lesson to documentary workers in the pursuit of statement and technique within a carefully selected and clearly planned field; an important point, this, in times when a film may start as a non-theatrical one-reeler and end up with a circuit-booking as a second feature or, more astonishingly, *vice versa*.

In *Land of Promise* Rotha has out-plentied *World of Plenty*. From the experience gained in the earlier film, he has achieved a greater concentration of fact and emotion, and has at the same time sought, not unsuccessfully, to simplify his argument by personalising it to a degree which, in *World of Plenty*, was only hinted at. As a result, *Land of Promise* grips you. The admirable personalities of Miles Malleson and John Mills impinge with salutary violence, and carry you unprotesting from Isotype to Isotype.

What is more important, the film has passion —passion in the sense that the wickedness of slums, and slums' concomitants, in modern society, is pushed home at you in a way which could (as a compliment) be described as Dickensian, were it not also so scientifically correct. Here indeed is the film's major merit, for a universally applicable lesson emerges, and the implicit parochiality of the subject in comparison with *World of Plenty* is at these points forgotten.

Vivid the images, brilliant the editing, dramatic and frightening some of the sequences, ingenious the sound track. But—and it is only a medium-sized "but"—the commentary from time to time button-holes you too much, and perhaps, like the mariner, will not stop more than one in three. And surely the final peroration bears too obvious a mark of the period between VE Day and the General Election?

Still, with all criticisms made (and *Land of Promise* is too notable a film not to merit criticism) here is something that will stir muddy thoughts and, better still, will rub the more reluctant noses in the mud from which, hitherto, complacent goloshes have provided protection.

Geoffrey Bell's epic of personnel selection switches us right to the other extreme. It is the third film to be made on that astonishing phenomenon, the emergence of the army as a pioneer in the fields of psychologically accurate methods of job allocation. The first film in the series was *Neuro-Psychiatry*, which dealt with the psychological maladjustments on the treatment of which Army selection theories are in part based. The second was *Personnel Selection—Recruits*, which was concerned with the blanket intake of conscripts, and the scientifically planned methods devised to put the right man in the right job.

Now *Personnel Selection—Officers* does what is filmically the most difficult job of all—the analysis of the methods by which leaders and leader-types (using the words in the democratic sense) are to be found. Like its predecessors, it uses a cool and objective technique; the superb diagrammatic qualities of the Shell Unit are employed with undiminished brilliance; and a steady, unhurried pace fits the film for the specialised audience for which it is designed.

But a new and exciting quality appears in this film which was lacking in the others. This quality arises (very suitably) from the subject rather than from the treatment. For here you have a study of a group of young men with varied characters and backgrounds but with identical aims, each and all of whom are being assessed by wide and searching criteria representative of the best that modern expertise can devise. Out of all the ingenious group and individual tests to which they are submitted there emerges not merely an efficiently objective description, but also a drama of human relationships and human endeavour. One is excited by the suspense (in no way artificially contrived) about who will make the grade and who will not—excited because Bell has been searching enough in filmic analysis to get under the skin of all the people he presents. Therefore, the film, which has no shape in the normal sense of the word, has a curious shape which is, one supposes, the shape of the curve, or part of the curve, of individual existence. All this, by the way, is summed up in the brilliantly shot sequences of psychiatric interviews, which are surely high spots in objective movie work.

Where *Personnel Selection—Officers* at times fails is in the stickiness which comes from a too obvious enthusiasm in rigid objectivity. Granted that in many places a hand microphone had to be held well in camera-foreground—an obvious necessity where group or individual tests had to be spontaneously recorded, and where rehearsal would have stultified the film's purpose—yet there are moments when this technique appears, in editing, to have been retained only to remind us how cold-blooded the film is trying to be. And as it is not as a whole cold-blooded, the result is unfortunate.

Both *Land of Promise* and *Personnel Selection —Officers* are films which prove that documentary, as ever, is not content to rest on its laurels, but continues to seek new methods and new impacts on audiences of all types, which means, by the way, you and me.

BASIL WRIGHT

THE CINÉASTES

(*Continued from page* 40)

Germaine Dulac, Man Ray, Marc Allegret—all working for Studio-Film which released my pictures in Europe. The most remarkable Studio-Film I saw in Paris was Claude Autant-Lara's *Construire Un Feu*. This was taken with a distorting lens, the Hypergonar. By means of this lens images were stretched and many packed side by side on normal stock. The film was shown with the same distorting lens, which had been used to photograph the picture, in front of the projector, and this restored the images to their original shape. The whole wall of the theatre was needed to take the spread of the images which had been packed on to the stock by means of the Hypergonar. In the centre of the wall one saw a man, at one side his thoughts, at the other some approaching danger, etc. Now one picture dominated, now another; at one time the wall was full of many little images, at another it was taken up by one titanic close up. It was two years after the picture was made before a cinema manager was found bold enough to show it.

And Paris, of course, meant the cinema surrealists. In Paris I met Louis Bunuel who made a film which shattered even the cinéastes. One has often thought how foolish many directors are to open their films with such a bang. Nine times out of nine and a half, the film can't live up to the punch opening. The Bunuel film opened with a close up of an eye, filling the screen. This close up was taken in a slaughter house. The eye was slashed across by a razor. It would have been unbearable if the film had lived up to that. Thank God it flopped to a mere dead donkey in a grand piano and ants crawling out of a man's mouth while he made love.

But that opening close up of the slashed eye! I have only seen one thing in cinema to match it, and that was an accident. This happened in a commercial motor-racing film with Eve Grey and John Stuart. One of the cars jumped the track. Baron Ventimiglia, the chief cameraman, rushed to the scene of disaster. He carried his hand camera (so useful for following shots) and forgot to switch off the mechanism. When the rushes were projected in the studio theatre, we saw with horror a record, taken by the hand camera on its own, of the injured extras dying.

Bunuel's film helped to attract artists to the cinéaste movement. One of the most remarkable artists in London, who associated herself with cinema, was Mabel Lapthorn. Mabel's favourite toy was a cup with a speaking tube attached and a taut membrane stretched over the mouth. She sprinkled sand on the membrane, and sang into the tube. The sand formed vibration patterns. The patterns (which were abstractions of synthesis and not analysis) Mabel would impose on the posters she did for advanced films. So much went on in her posters, in the different folds of the pattern, it was hardly necessary to go in and see the film. Encouraged by her success, Mabel started a campaign to try to persuade cinema managers to break the white beam of the projector with soft coloured lights striking back from the stage to the auditorium. "I'm not self complacent," said Mabel Lapthorn, "I'm self contained."

The last international gesture of the cinéastes, before the talkies took over, was a Congress in Brussels. Everyone tried to keep up morale and pretend he was as busy as a touring

revue. I talked at midnight to Joris Ivens and Henri Storck in a vegetarian restaurant about movement in cinema still life: the wind rocking a chair, the sea sifting sand, the unseen hand which tugs a rope by the quay. Then, when I finally got back to my hotel, Charles Dekeukelaire broke into my bedroom with a hand projector and insisted on showing me his last film on the bedroom wall. I got up out of my chair and intercepted the projector ray, only to find a ballet performed by apples projected on my stomach.

I remember there was a grand presentation of a Czechoslovakian film about a condemned man's last request for a prostitute. The girl who went ruined herself "in the profession". That was the theme of the tragedy. . . .

And that was Brussels! . . . I don't mean that all cinéaste activity came to an immediate full stop at the same time. Some cinéastes managed to make compromises and fit into some corner of the new industry. There was Len Lye, for instance. Len's first film was a highbrow cartoon about the beginning of geological shapes, and ended with a conflict between land and water. An allegory, maybe, of an exterior force attacking the true spirit of the artist. And Len ought to know about that. He worked his passage over from Australia, and came out of the stokehold bald. Young, bald and handsome, Len has a "sang Freud" and a way of putting little "impress-me-nots" in the shade. Len's compromise was to paint patterns directly on celluloid (thereby cutting down overhead costs) and selling the film for advertising. It was the Art and Craft side of films.

And the cinéaste mind has persisted, only the new cinéastes cannot afford to put their ideas into practice. Take A. Kraszna-Krausz, the Hungarian film critic. K.K. would like to combine cinema, television, colour and stereoscopic photography into a new magic. He said to me, "Imagine the new machine in your room. It is possible to turn a knob and tune in to Africa. Then you have a televised, stereoscopic coloured image of a man in your room, a solid figure who, so to speak, walks on your own carpet. Then you turn another knob and tune in to Iceland. From Iceland you can summon a woman. The Lap woman and the African man are brought together by your will. Would it be too fantastic to say that you can let them get to know one another? At any rate, I think you can get what I'm driving at. My new tele-cinema would help every man to become a creator, to project his personality into an infinite number of situations of his own choosing."

Alas, it would cost a fortune to prove that it did or didn't.

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Sir,

In your fifty-first issue, your reviewer of feature films flays *Brief Encounter* in a manner which is quite unjustified and in my opinion, very bad taste. Only a cynic or person completely out of touch with the life of average normal people could describe this film as "this slight story of two middle-aged people in search of a bed which became vaguely comic instead of being noble or pathetic". That comment just isn't true, and any reviewer capable of such writing is in my opinion not suitable for the general standards of *D.N.L.*

DEREK STEWART

THE VISUAL UNIT

by R. K. Neilson Baxter

SINCE THE visual unit is something comparatively new, it is perhaps not surprising that some misconceptions of it are about. It is sensible to attempt a definition and, to that end, first to trace its history.

The statement that the production and use of teaching films is still at the experimental level is becoming a trifle threadbare. Nevertheless, it cannot be too often emphasised. During the pre-war years, methods of production were not sufficiently specialised, with the result that the material produced had only one consistent merit —that there were plenty of things for the teachers to criticise in every film. Some films were criticised because they tried to cram in too much, others because they left out points considered to be important. Controversy raged round the "sound versus silent" problem. Teachers complained because they could not stop a film, holding a still picture on the screen while they talked about it. And so on.

But the opinions about any film varied. It became obvious that variations in teaching method made a film valuable to some and not to others. To some of us who met and talked into the small hours at Visual Education Conferences and suchlike, it seemed reasonable to experiment with something more flexible than merely one film to cover a subject—or even a series of films.

From the producer's point of view, too, this idea had merit, for the instructional film techniques that were developing during the war showed quite clearly that for a teaching film to be thoroughly effective it must start with first principles and proceed through a clear logical line of reasoning, leaving nothing out, to its conclusion. This very often meant that films became very much longer than they conveniently should have been. They had to be broken up into several self-contained parts, or accompanying still strips were used as mnemonics, since the whole film and a lecture could not be given in the same study-period.

If this was true of Service instruction, which was to all intents and purposes standardised, even greater difficulties might be anticipated with material to suit the diversity of the schools. No film could safely assume that certain facts were already known to the children who were to see it —sometimes they might be, often they would not. The necessity to play safe by aiming to be comprehensive would result in completely unwieldy films, totally unsuitable either for a child's capacity or for the 40 minute classroom period.

One was at all times reminded, however, that no film should attempt to be complete in itself. It must be regarded as a tool to be used by the teacher at his discretion. It was only one of many visual aids which could be placed at the teacher's disposal to be used by him as circumstances, the mentality of his classes or the curriculum might demand.

So the idea of the visual unit came into being. A visual unit sets out to do two things: to supply the most appropriate visual aid to support the teaching of each aspect of any given topic, and to provide any teacher of that topic with a family of visual aids which he can use as suits him best. No single component of a visual unit attempts to give complete coverage of the topic; each is designed to do its own particular job, and it is self-evident therefore that they must be properly inter-related.

Any of the visual aids which are practical for class or lecture room use may be included in a visual unit, for example, sound films, silents, still strips (or lantern slides), models, wall display material, illustrated booklets, and so on. But the subject must be studied in advance by experienced technical and educational specialists to determine how it can best be treated and which of the many possible components are appropriate. It cannot properly be planned piecemeal: it must be an integrated whole. Nor can the makers of different components effectively contribute if they work independently: it must be a unified plan.

The components of a visual unit are emphatically not intended to provide alternatives for schools equipped in different ways. Nor should they be regarded as a means to offset lack of proper equipment. A visual unit assumes the availability of all normal projection equipment, both cine and still. It must be an equation of two things, namely, the correct interpretation of each aspect of the topic and the teacher's probable needs, which governs the choice of components.

For example, a given topic might be covered by a twenty minute sound film giving a broad survey of the subject; several shorter films, either commentated or silent, dealing with special aspects of it which require movement for their proper exposition; a number of still strips (or sets of lantern slides) for the exposition of any aspects which do not demand movement or for recapitulating the key points of the films for detailed study or revision, or as records of special material; wall display material and simple models for reference purposes over a period of time, e.g. a term or the duration of a course; and a handbook to provide an index to the whole unit and to the content of the material.

The Ministry of Education has accepted the idea of the visual unit, and intends making a number for experimental purposes. Very soon the first of them on the subject of "Local Studies" will be released. They will be handled through the C.O.I. whose Films, Exhibitions, Photographic and Publication Divisions make it especially suitable. An inter-divisional Visual Unit Committee is already working to cope with the practical problems of unified supervision, sub-contracting and distribution. The problems are complex; to study them closely and to draw upon every source of information and experience at present available is essential. Finally, the production of the Visual Units will not have been justified unless means are provided to assess their effectiveness in practice, which means the fullest collaboration of the teaching profession itself.

THE SCIENTIFIC FILM ASSOCIATION

The SFA Catalogue of Films of General Scientific Interest is due to be published at 5/-. Orders are now being taken at the SFA head office, 34 Soho Square, W.1.

POPULAR SCIENCE REELS IN THE USSR

by Vsevolod Shevtsov

"SCIENCE AND TECHNICS", a popular science film magazine, appears on the screen at the beginning of every month, and is run before the main picture in the programme. These films are put out by "Voentekhfilm" which maintains close contact with such scientific institutions of the capital as the Academy of Sciences and the Agricultural Academy, and with large laboratories, as well as with such organisations as the bureau of rationalisation proposals. All of these scientific establishments send in materials on their latest discoveries, inventions and innovations which are discussed at the studio with competent specialists, the aim being to decide whether the material can be made into a film. The series serves to popularise scientific knowledge. The films generally run for 10 to 12 minutes and they treat four subjects each. The object is to avoid any two subjects of the same kind, or to give any two subjects the same background. For instance, we are taken from a laboratory to a factory, one subject being biology, the other some interesting technical discovery.

One of the latest films, for example, begins with a description of the construction work on the Moscow–Saratov gas main. We are taken over the layout and told of the origin of the subterranean gas deposits. The commentator then informs the audience as to the progress being made on the construction. Following this is a short description of the discovery of penicillin. It begins with a portrait of the English scientist, Fleming, and the commentator tells the interesting story of his work, resulting in the discovery of the medicinal properties of the fungus. We are then taken to the laboratory of the Soviet scientist, Zinaida Ermolyeva, who succeeded in extracting the drug from another type of fungus. This leads us up to shots taken in a Moscow hospital where penicillin is yielding fine results.

The film goes on to outline the principles employed in a new method of metal working by means of electric charges. We see how in the shop of a Moscow plant the metal is worked to the required shape by applying electricity. Last in the series is the interesting story of how a mollusc and a tiny fish in the aquarium form an alliance in the struggle for existence.

Others in the series demonstrate the latest achievements in the silk, steel, shipbuilding and plastics industries; and the work of physicists, chemists, zoologists and agronomists. The most recent are devoted to the work of Stalin prize winners. We see the experiments of Academician Kapitza in low temperatures and the liquefaction of air; Vavilov's work in luminescent substances; Professor Rosenberg's process of drying blood serum.

The 67th issue of "Science and Technics" is to appear on the screen shortly, directed by Konstantin Kogtev, who put out the first film of this type 16 years ago. Kogtev who has considerable knowledge in many fields which he films with consummate skill, has mustered a group of competent producers, scenario writers, and cameramen, to work with him.

CORRESPONDENCE

SIR,

No one interested in the possibilities of Visual Aids in Education would choose to quibble with your summing up of the memoranda on the subject issued by the "5 Group" and "25 Group", and of the P.E.P. Broadsheet "The Film in Schools" in your March/April issue. In the final paragraph, however, enthusiasm has got the better of facts. You state "This remarkable unanimity has been reached because ALL (the capitals are mine) teachers in Britain have decided that they and no one else shall command the film in education". This, Sir, is a gross overstatement of the facts, for not five per cent of British teachers have knowledge of, or interest in, visual media. The, nowadays, much maligned Film Institute has tried for years, with appallingly inadequate resources, to spread the gospel among teachers, but apart from isolated areas, very isolated, and lone enthusiasts among the teachers, the results have been negative. Chief Education Officers and L.E.A.s have not, on the whole, been accommodating. In some cases definitely hostile. Professional bodies have shown no positive interest. The result has been that those few teachers who have kept the faith have had to make do with the comparatively few but excellent films from G-B.I. and the brilliant documentaries (useful as "background" films) from the Gas Association and Petroleum Films Bureau. The resources of the Central Film Library are large in numbers but not more than five per cent are real teaching films. That they have been so widely used is due to (1) they were free, (2) there were few alternatives.

If Visual Aids are to be employed to their full, and literally, ALL teachers made aware of their possibilities and familiar with their use, there must be established a nation-wide organisation with provincial centres or branches. No matter how this be done—officially, semi-officially, through L.E.A.s, or even through commercial channels, so long as it is done soon—and thoroughly.

Until these branches are working and their staffs have penetrated to the lowest school levels I feel that "All teachers" is an enthusiastic overstatement. Perhaps, Sir, you have been dazzled by the high sounding names of the bodies represented on "The Five" and "the Twenty-five". Would it be unfair to ask what practical knowledge of the use of visual media the delegates from these bodies had?

R. S. MILES

[*While we agree with our correspondent that the scarcity of suitable films has hindered the recognition by many teachers of the value of film in education we feel that he has perhaps missed the deeper significance of the combined effort of the memoranda. If he would look deeper and view the trend of opinion and action he would perhaps agree that these memoranda represent complete agreement of an* IDEAL *by the teaching profession, an ideal which is even now being implemented by the Ministry of Education.*—ED., *D.N.L.*]

CATALOGUE OF M.O.I. FILMS MADE IN 1945

15-M : Fifteen-minute Film
T : Mainly Theatrical Release
NT : Mainly Non-Theatrical Release
I : Instructional
OO : Mainly for Overseas use
OOO : Wholly for Overseas use

Published by permission of the C.O.I. An asterisk indicates that the film is in the Central Film Library.

1. THEATRICAL AND NON-THEATRICAL RELEASES

TITLE	DISTRIBUTION	PRODUCTION UNIT	PRODUCER	DIRECTOR	RELEASE DATE T	RELEASE DATE NT	LENGTH	NOTES
*Achimota	NT	Taurus	—	John Page	—	1/46	1,755	
Air Plan, The	T	RAF FU	—	—	7/45	—	2,518	
*Birthday	NT	Data	D. Alexander	Budge Cooper	—	11/45	1,996	
Bomb Repair Speeded Up	—	Paramount	—	—	—	—	1,347	
Broad Fourteens, The	T	Crown	J. Holmes	R. McNaughton	8/45	—	3,142	
*Broken Dykes	15-M	—	—	John Ferno	8/45	8/45	1,282	
Burma Victory	T	AFU	—	H. MacDonald	11/45	—	5,567	
*Canada's North-West	15-M	—	—	—	7/45	—	—	Acquired and re-edited.
Central Front, Burma	15-M	Gryphon	—	—	—	12/45	941	
*Channel Islands, The	15-M	Crown	B. Wright	G. Bryant	10/45	1/46	1,530	
*Children's Charter	NT	Crown	J. Holmes	G. Bryant	—	3/45	1,552	
*Chinese in Britain	NT	New Realm	Sylvia Cummins	—	—	5/45	935	
Churchill in the Middle East	OOO	—	—	—	—	—	416	Arabic version only
*Deep Pan Bottling	I	Films of Gt. Britain	—	A. Buchanan	—	3/45	845	
*Diary for Timothy, A	T & NT	Crown	B. Wright	H. Jennings	—	—	3,504	
*Dominion Status	NT	Paramount	—	—	—	12/45	1,635	
*Eighth Plague, The	NT	Crown	—	—	—	2/45	994	
Far East War Magazine	OOO	—	—	—	—	—	606	
*Farm Work	NT	Crown	B. Wright	M. Gordon	—	9/45	1,894	
*Father and Son	NT	—	L. Schauder	—	—	1/46	1,266	Acquired and re-edited
*Fenlands	NT	Green Park	—	K. Annakin	—	1/46	1,698	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
*Fiji Return	15-M	New Realm	—	—	4/45	4/45	1,211	Compilation by Sylvia Cummins
*Frame Concrete Housing	I	Verity	—	—	—	3/45	1,832	Not released
*French Town	15-M	Realist	J. Taylor	A. Shaw	1/45	4/45	1,345	
*Heir to the Throne	OO	Movietone	G. Sanger	—	—	—	934	
How to Erect the American Pre-Fab. Houses	I	—	—	—	—	10/45	1,517	
*It Might be You	15-M	Crown	B. Wright	M. Gordon	1/46	—	1,333	
Journey Together	I	RAF	—	—	1/46	—	8,422	
*Jungle Mariners	NT	Crown	—	Ralph Elton	—	1/46	1,259	
*Johnny Gurkha	NT	Crown	—	—	—	12/45	914	Re-edited from an Indian film
*Killing Farm Rats	I	Crown	—	—	—	3/45	1,316	
*Last Shot, The	15-M	Exploitation	—	—	12/45	1/46	1,332	Compilation by J. Mellor.
Latin-American Raw Materials	OOO	Merlin	M. Hankinson	M. Hankinson	—	—	927	L.A. versions only
*Mamprusi Village	NT	—	—	John Page	—	12/45	1,740	
*Maximum Effort	OOO	Merlin	—	M. Hankinson	—	2/45	1,797	
*Mosquitoes	NT	G.B.S.S.	—	—	—	10/45	1,536	
*Near Home	NT	Basic	—	Kay Mander	—	—	2,227	
*Necessary Journey	15-M	Seven League	—	H. Nieter	3/45	4/45	1,239	
*Night and Day	NT	Gryphon	—	J. Weiss	—	4/45	1,549	
*Nine Hundred, The	T & NT	Exploitation	—	—	6/45	—	1,758	
*Outdoor Tomato Growing	I	Films of G.B.	A. Buchanan	A. Buchanan	—	4/45	1,287	
*Pacific Thrust	15-M	Verity	—	K. Annakin	2/45	2/45	1,351	
*Partners	NT	Crown	—	—	—	11/45	1,645	*Know the Commonwealth*, 4
Patients Are In	OOO	Crown	B. Wright	P. Bolton	—	—	954	
*Personnel Selection—Recruits	NT & OO	Shell	E. Anstey and B. Wright	G. Bell	—	10/45	5,245	
*Plan and the People	NT	Realist	J. Taylor	F. Sainsbury	—	1/46	1,659	
Portuguese Ambassador's Tour	OOO	Film Traders	—	J. Hollering	—	—	1,040	
*Proud City	NT	Green Park	—	R. Keene	—	1/46	2,381	
*Put Yourself in His Shoes	I	DATA	A. Elton	J. Chambers	—	10/45	1,450	
Resident Minister in British West Africa	OOO	Taurus	J. Page	J. Page	—	—	1,210	
*Report from Burma	15-M	New Realm	—	—	5/45	3/45	1,148	Compilation by Sylvia Cummins
	NT	Crown	—	—	—	—	891	*Know the Commonwealth*, 3
*Round Pegs	NT	New Realm	—	—	—	1/46	1,350	Re-edited version of *Personnel Selection—Recruits*
*Sisal	NT	—	—	Kingsford Davis	—	4/45	867	
Soldier Sailor	I	Realist	J. Taylor	A. Shaw	6/45	—	4,397	
Soldier Comes Home, A	15-M	Gryphon	D. Taylor	J. Eldridge	11/45	—	1,195	
*Some Like It Rough	NT	Pub. Rel.	—	R. Massingham	—	2/45	1,278	
*Southern Rhodesia	NT	Crown	Basil Wright	—	—	5/45	863	*Know the Commonwealth*
*Star and the Sand, The	NT	Merlin	M. Hankinson	G. Gunn	—	5/45	1,790	
*Story of D.D.T.	NT	A.K.S.	—	—	—	5/45	2,050	
*Stricken Peninsular	15-M	Seven League	H. Nieter	P. Fletcher	6/45	7/45	1,352	
*Sugar Beet I—Cultivation	I	Blackheath	—	R. Cathles	—	11/45	1,915	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
*Sugar Beet II—Harvesting	I	Blackheath	—	R. Cathles	—	11/45	1,040	Assoc. Producer: E. Anstey
*Supplies to the Soviets	NT	Merlin	M. Hankinson	—	—	12/45	856	
*Teaching	I	Merlin	M. Hankinson	M. Hankinson	—	11/45	2,323	
*This Was Japan	15-M	Crown	B. Wright	—	9/45	—	1,078	
*Time and Tide	NT	Films of Fact	P. Rotha	—	—	10/45	1,445	
*Today and Tomorrow	T & NT	World Wide	R. Bond	R. Carruthers	12/45	4/46	3,655	Assoc. Producer: A. Elton
*Total War in Britain	NT	Films of Fact	P. Rotha	P. Rotha	—	1/46	1,939	
*Tractor Engine Overhaul	I	Films of G.B.	A. Buchanan	A. Buchanan	—	10/45	2,345	
*Training for Mechanised Mines	I	Films of G.B.	A. Buchanan	A. Buchanan	—	10/45	2,807	
True Glory	T	AFU	—	—	10/45	—	7,861	
Unrelenting Struggle	OOO	Crown	B. Wright	—	—	—	1,547	
*U.S.A.	NT	Films of Fact	P. Rotha	P. Rotha	—	3/45	1,773	
War and New Zealand	NT	New Realm	S. Cummins	—	—	—	832	
*Worker and Warfront No. 15	NT	Films of Fact	P. Rotha	D. Ross	—	3/45	924	
No. 16	NT	Films of Fact	P. Rotha	D. Ross	—	6/45	886	
No. 17	NT	Films of Fact	P. Rotha	D. Ross	—	—	—	Not issued
No. 18	NT	Films of Fact	P. Rotha	D. Ross	—	1/46	1,024	
*Your Children's Ears	NT	Realist	Margaret Thomson	A. Pearl	—	11/45	1,398	
*Your Children's Eyes	NT	Realist	J. Taylor	A. Strasser	—	10/45	1,703	
*Your Children's Teeth	NT	Realist	Margaret Thomson	Jane Massey	—	10/45	1,308	

2. NEWSREEL TRAILERS

TITLE	PRODUCTION UNIT	DIRECTOR	GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT	RELEASE DATE	NOTES
Gas about Fuel	Crown	M. Gordon	Fuel and Power	11th Jan.	
Take a Letter Please	Concanen	D. de Marney	Supply	18th Jan.	
Hands Off	Film Traders	G. Hollering	War Office	25th Jan.	
Road Sense	Merlin	M. Hankinson	War Transport	1st Feb.	
More Hanky Panky	Dufay Chromex	Elwis	Health	5th Feb.	
A Light to Remember	Crown	M. Gordon	Fuel and Power	24th Feb.	
Paper Possibilities	Film Traders	G. Hollering	Supply	1st March	
Cycle Tyres	Nettlefold	Bladen-Peake	Supply	15th March	
Land Girls for Scotland	Crown	—	Dep. of Agriculture for Scotland	18th March	Scotland only
When Winter Comes	Crown	—	Fuel and Power	22nd March	
The Old Old Story	Merton Park	—	Supply	9th April	
Diphtheria VI	Concanen	D. de Marney	Health	12th April	Re-issue
Pandora's Boxes	Merton Park	—	Supply	19th April	
No Smoke Without	Nettlefold	Bladen-Peake	Fire Officers Committee	23rd April	
Leather Must Last	Dufay Chromex	Elwis	Board of Trade	26th April	
To be a Farmer's Girl	Verity	De Latour	Agriculture and Fisheries	7th May	
Nightingales	Concanen	D. de Marney	Labour	24th May	Re-issue
Fruit Picking	Allen Harper Prods.	A. Harper	Dep. of Agriculture for Scotland	14th May	Scotland only
Kerb Drill	Merlin	Hankinson	War Transport	14th June	
Summer Travelling	Larkins	W. M. Larkins	War Transport	5th July	
Potato Turn Up	Green Park	P. Scott	Dep. of Agriculture for Scotland	12th July	
Don't Touch	Crown	Michael Gordon	Air Ministry	26th July	
War in the Wardrobe	Larkins	W. M. Larkins	Board of Trade	2nd August	
Help Wanted	Film Traders	G. Hollering	Agriculture and Fisheries	16th August	England and Wales only
Golden Glory	Film Traders	G. Hollering	Dep. of Agriculture for Scotland	19th August	Scotland only
Tombstone Canyon	Dufay Chromex	Elwis	War Transport	6th Sept.	
Books, Books, Books	Concanen	D. de Marney	Labour	11th Oct.	
Post-War Road Safety	Verity	M. Munden	War Transport	5th Nov.	
Ministry of Fuel's Appeal	Pathé	—	Fuel and Power	8th Nov.	
Coughs and Sneezes	Public Relationship	R. Massingham	Health	15th Nov.	
Dangerous Trophies	Brunner Lloyd	—	War Office	22nd Nov.	
Thereby Hangs a Tail	Brunner Lloyd	P. Brunner	Supply	3rd Dec.	
Post Haste	Public Relationship	R. Massingham	Post Office	6th Dec.	
Woman's Job, A	Concanen	D. de Marney	Labour	13th Dec.	
Writings Worth While	Dufay Chromex	Elwis	War Office	20th Dec.	
Resettlement Advice Service	Verity	M. Munden	Lahour	31st Dec.	

3. COLONIAL FILM UNIT PRODUCTIONS

TITLE	LENGTH 35 mm. ft.	TITLE	LENGTH 35 mm. ft.
African Timber	2,050	Colonial Cinemagazine No. 3	1,030
Africans Study Social Work in Britain	1,050	Freed Prisoners of War Return to South Africa	1,010
Boy Scouts	3,000	Girl Guides in Uganda	—
Boy Scouts in Uganda	—	Home Guards Stand Down	1,550
British Empire at War No. 31	848	Jonathan Builds a Dam	—
British Empire at War No. 32	962	Kenya Daisies	—
British Empire at War No. 33	1,023	*Kaduna Chief's Conference	120
British Empire at War No. 34	640	London Children Celebrate Victory	890
British Empire at War No. 35	772	Learie Constantine	851
British Empire at War No. 36	980	†Plainsmen of Barotseland	—
British Empire at War No. 37	792	Rider	430
B itish Empire at War No. 38	1,020	Slim Rhyder	425
British Empire at War No. 39	986	‡Secondary Modern School	3,960
Colonial Cinemagazine No. 1	908	‡Village School	2,700
Cnlonial Cinemagazine No. 2	1,175	West African Church Parade	630

*Silent † Dubbed into Twi and Yoroba ‡ Adapted from other M.O.I. films.

FILMS ACQUIRED BY THE CENTRAL FILM LIBRARY IN 1945

TITLE	PRODUCTION UNIT	LENGTH ft.
AMALGAMED ENGINEERING UNION		
Unity is Strength	World Wide	1,363
BRITISH COUNCIL		
Student Nurse	G.B.I.	1,269
Water Service	Selwyn	1,092
Lessons from the Air	Merton Park	1,750
Hospital School	Spectator	989
CANADA		
*Canada's North-West	National Film Board	887
Democracy at Work	National Film Board	1,539
Fighting Sea Fleas	National Film Board	929
Flight Six	National Film Board	941
After Work	National Film Board	173
I.C.I.		
Factors of Soil Fertility	Realist FU	2,002
Lime	Realist FU	1,000
Land Drainage	Realist FU	2,000
Penicillin	Realist FU	1,818
†Technique of Anaesthesia, The	Realist FU	
INDIA		
India Builds Her Ships	Information Films of India	960
Melody of Hindustan	Information Films of India	1,036
Tree of Wealth	Dept. of Inf. & Broad. Stn.	955
INDIA —*cont.*		
Tube Wells	Dept. of Inf. & Broad. Stn.	835
Egging Them On	Information Films of India	821
In Rural Maharasthra	Information Films of India	1,090
Potteries	Information Films of India	904
MINISTRY OF FUEL AND POWER		
‡Meco-Mnore Power Loader	Larkins	1,673
‡Joy Loader	Larkins	1,530
RAF		
In Defence nf Britain	RAF FU	778
Air Plan, The	RAF FU	2,518
RAAF Over Europe	RAF FU	1,670
SOVIET FILM AGENCY		
Factory in the Urals	—	1,000
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA		
Library of Congress	O.W.I.	1,842
UNIVERSAL NEWS		
Radar	Universal News	705
WAR OFFICE		
United States	A.K.S.	4,243
What's the Next Job	A.K.S.	2,090
Shop to Let	A.K.S.	2,207
Public Opinion	A.K.S.	1,363
Technique of Instruction	A.K.S.	5,555

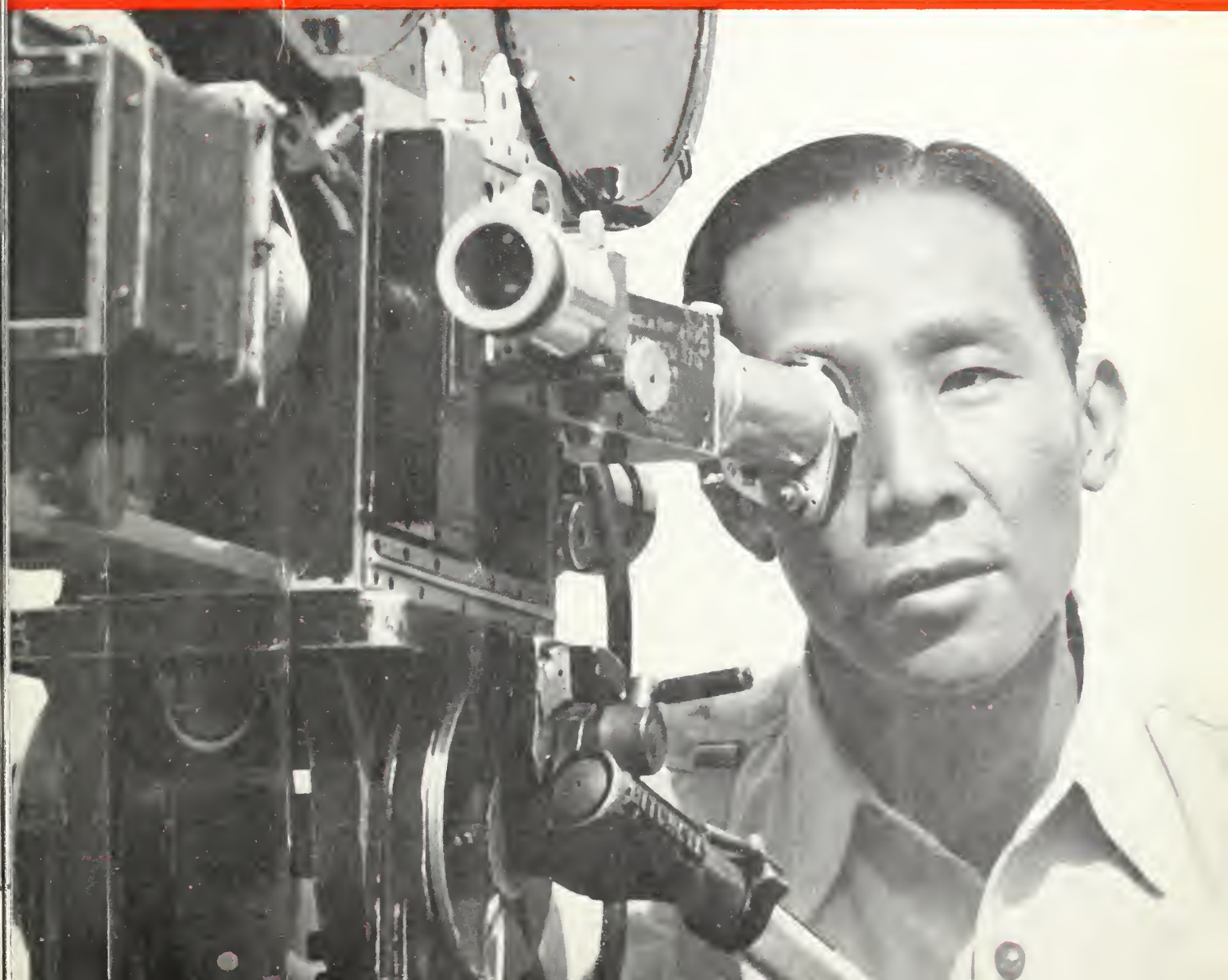
* Monthly release for July. † For complete list of titles, see *D.N.L.* Vol. VI, No. 51, p. 31. ‡ Silent versions available.

SHENVAL PRESS, LONDON AND HERTFORD

DOCUMENTARY

NEWS LETTER NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 1946 ONE SHILLING

IN THIS ISSUE: Wartime Wedding by John Shearman; Society, Science and Movie by a Psychiatrist; Grierson takes Stock; Malayan Road-Show; Municipal Cinema in Norway; and Documentary Perspective, Notes of the Month, Film Reviews and Book Reviews



the stuff of life

Good documentaries are scarce. Those contributed by the Gas Industry have been made on the basis of the common interest between Industry and public in the urgent human problems of food, shelter, health and education.

For the making of these films the Gas Industry has called on the leading figures in the documentary film world, including John Grierson, Paul Rotha, Edgar Anstey, Arthur Elton, Ralph Bond, John Taylor, Albert Cavalcanti, Ralph Smart and Frank Sainsbury.

The result has been that Gas Industry Films such as 'Eating at Work,' 'The Londoners,' 'Words and Actions,' 'Enough to Eat,' 'Housing Problems,' 'New Worlds for Old,' 'It comes from Coal' have been seen by thousands of people each week and bookings have come from as far afield as Australia, South Africa and Palestine.

New Gas Industry Films are now in production and plans have been made to extend the usefulness of the film library by the use of colour and the production of special instructional films for schools.

At present more than 20 films are available to approved borrowers. Most films are made in silent as well as sound versions and running times vary from 5 to 30 minutes. Full particulars from your local Gas Undertaking, or post this coupon. We should be happy to have suggestions or criticisms from any reader of the 'Documentary News Letter' who is interested in film library service.

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DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER

NOVEMBER–DECEMBER 1946 VOL 6 NO 54 PUBLISHED BY FILM CENTRE 34 SOHO SQUARE LONDON W1

Annual subscription 6s. (published six times a year)

Bulk orders up to 50 copies for schools and Film Societies

DOCUMENTARY NEWS LETTER first appeared in January, 1940, as a duplicated sheet for circulation to private subscribers. The first issue aroused sufficient interest to justify the appearance of No. 2 as a printed magazine which has since achieved an influential circulation in Britain and overseas, but has continued to be available only to the subscriber. Now, with our fifty-fourth issue, we go out to the newsagents and the booksellers and prepare to welcome new readers.

Documentary News Letter was founded to serve a specific need. With the outbreak of war in 1939 it became clear to a group of practitioners in the documentary field—experts in production and distribution—that they must somehow become articulate in the interests of the proper use of the film for purposes of wartime information and instruction. The members of the original Editorial Board had most of them been associated with the documentary film movement since its earliest days. Working with John Grierson first at the Empire Marketing Board and later with the Post Office Film Unit they had collaborated in developing techniques of documentary production and distribution. When the war began they had expected to find that the Government would immediately use the film as an instrument of public defence, that documentary film-makers would be mobilised to inform the public of the vital issues involved and to assist in the preparation of the Armed Forces and the civil population for the hard times ahead. It was assumed that the newly established Ministry of Information would see this as one of its principal functions.

Yet although the quality of British documentary film making was recognised in every country in the world, although indeed the documentary film had come to be widely regarded as the only original British contribution to the development of the film medium, the Ministry of Information ignored the instrument which lay ready to its hand.

It was almost exclusively to combat this combination of lethargy and antagonism that the group of documentary film experts associated with Film Centre decided that they must appeal to enlightened opinion throughout the country in the interests of an efficient use of the documentary film. Other methods besides the publication of *D.N.L.* were also used in the campaign that followed—articles in other publications, lectures, private meetings with politicians and civil servants—and eventually the Ministry of Information abandoned its early film policy of tentatively employing a few threadbare fictional themes and turned to its task of using the full powers of the medium.

D.N.L. continued to advocate forward-looking policies, the planning of films and programmes of films into an integrated pattern which would give validity and meaning to the post-war democratic world as well as assist in the waging of the day-to-day battle. And now, with the documentary film moving forward into its peacetime phase, the Editorial Board of *D.N.L.* feels that the time has come for the paper to reach a wider circle of readers. As a result of the war documentary films have come to be accepted by large numbers of cinemagoers and are regarded by most teachers, industrialists, civil servants and scientists as part of their future professional pattern of activity. To readers of all five types—the cinemagoer, the scientist, the teacher, the civil servant and the industrialist—*D.N.L.* in its new form will seek to appeal, believing that they will find common ground in the discussion of the relationship between the film and the problems and tasks of these difficult days.

Commercial developments in the documentary field which have lately resulted in the production of such outstanding films as *Theirs is the Glory* and *The Way We Live* may in some quarters be held to demonstrate that documentary has now been accepted by the film industry as a necessary and permanent part of its commercial activity, that the voice crying in the wilderness has made the wilderness blossom as the rose and may well now remain silent and enjoy its achievement. We do not agree. The easier it becomes to make and distribute documentary films the more danger there is that they will become facile in manner and empty of ideas, and against such dangers *D.N.L.* will be vigilant.

Members of the Board have lately visited each of the five continents in the course of their production activities and everywhere they have found an appetite for knowledge of the factual film. In the United States, Canada, Australia, France, Denmark, Czechoslovakia, India, Burma and Malaya plans are under discussion or in operation for the wide use of the film of fact for information and instruction. *Documentary News Letter* will seek to keep readers in these countries informed of what goes on in the world of documentary beyond their shores; and it will welcome news of their own contributions to documentary development.

DOCUMENTARY GOES TO TOWN

For fifteen years the ugly duckling of the cinema world, the social documentary has now become "box-office". Most people have noticed the increase in the number of studio-produced films with a markedly sociological flavour in their setting or story. They have grown accustomed also to seeing in the cinema, albeit infrequently, short films on social organisation made in obedience to the needs of wartime public information. These are not to be confused with the realistic combat films—documentaries like *Target for Tonight*, *Desert Victory*, *True Glory* and—recently—*Theirs is the Glory*. The factual story of these films was already high-drama, presenting little box-office problem provided the technical execution was credible and of high quality. No, the point for comment is that films which tackle a serious social problem now excite public interest.

Following the wide box-office success of *World of Plenty* another film has recently thrown this development into greater prominence. *The Way We Live* has made its mark partly because, as even all the critics are agreed, it is a good film. The film has a story—or rather two stories; it follows the day-to-day life of a Plymouth family—father, mother and three daughters—in their search for a decent home. The second story, intertwined neatly with the first, is that of a journalist in search of material on "town-planning".

Why does this film in particular spotlight this new development, the intrusion of serious subject-matter on to the entertainment screens of Britain? Let's deal with less important, yet valid, reasons first. There was a certain amount of "build-up" publicity while the film was in production; it was well handled, some of it coming through the pages of *Picture Post*. Secondly, the film critics got on to a rumour that the film was not going to be distributed. Baseless or no, they took no chance and demanded to see it. They liked the film and said it was a disgrace to the trade if it were not shown. This adventitious publicity brought the film well in the public eye. Thirdly, it was made by a young woman, Jill Craigie, whose second film-direction job it was.

A Commercial Venture

What is of real interest, however, about this latest flight of documentary on to the starry screen, is that it was made within commercial terms of reference; it came from the studio world, from technicians and finance hitherto outside the documentary group. And it was intended—presumably—that it should bring back cash from the box-office. Most previous documentary films which have been theatrically released have been made under outside sponsorship, that is to say, the production unit had a contract for making a given film for some organisation, Government or commercial group, interested in getting a film story told about its place in the social scheme. Such a film as this, for example, might well have been paid for by Plymouth City Council. But in this case it was paid for by Mr. Rank. Moreover most such documentary films have relied upon part of their screen space coming eventually from non-theatrical release; there—whether or no they were a box-office success and got entertainment screen space—they would have a chance of putting over their message to audiences who came more for instruction than entertainment. How does this studio-made, studio-financed documentary trim its sails to make the box-office harbour? Or does it alter its entire rig in the attempt?

About it there is, first, a general impression of lightness, hitherto not often linked with the documentary style. The film doesn't have at you with a social message. Just when it seems an audience of Plymouth citizens is going to play its serious democratic role and listen to a film-illustrated lecture by Professor Abercrombie, we come upon an old man snoring; a little later upon the whispered question, unexpected but human, "When do the blooming pubs open?" These people voice any resentment the audience may feel at being tricked into having a lecture; yet they also make prominent the *attentiveness* of *most* of the lecture audience.

Secondly, its inspiration comes from being shot where the people live. This helps to ensure its validity as a social documentary. (Though we have called the film "studio-made", this is not to imply that it was *shot* in a film studio. It was, however, financed, and the organisational aspects of its making were handled, as for a studio-type film.)

Particular interest centres on Abercrombie's lecture for (as in *The Forgotten Village*) the technique of "film within film" is used to put across serious information—or at all events to conjure up feelings well-disposed to serious information; this within the framework of a story which sets out to give, not a factual, so much as a warm and human picture of its subject.

Fact or Feeling?

Typical of the film's style is the sequence which pictures one of the social problems besetting the inadequately housed. The second daughter of the family of the story is a rather flighty young girl, beginning to assert herself with the precocity of adolescence. Her two main interests—unendearing, but perhaps apt for an audience in entertainment mood—are her appearance, and boys. Going out to Plymouth Hoe to meet her girl friend, because there is no scope near "home" for her leisure needs, she arrives a little early. While the couples dance in the open air, she waits alone. She has, of course, the opportunity of refusing a "conventional" approach from a British sailor, but is effectively picked up by an American. Her inner thoughts and reactions to the situation came over thought-whispered monologue: "I really shouldn't; but he is good looking. Hope none of mother's friends are watching us; and he dances well." Now this is one way of putting over the social message of *Pick-up Girl*. It is the opposite of the statistical method—"67 per cent of cases of juveniles brought before the magistrates in Blackhampton were from areas where the average habitation density was 2·6 persons per room". The latter method gives us facts we can handle; the former gives us a feeling about the things these facts mean—and because they then impinge upon us deeply, they create the will to *do* something about it. But we don't know *what* to do until we have facts. So for completeness both styles of presenting the message should be used. If *The Way We Live* had been able to cope with both styles it would have been a masterpiece. It is in fact a very good film.

For it and for the others which are coming in future years, the hard spade work of the old hands of the documentary school must have credit. Their efforts—theatrical successes like *Night Mail*, *North Sea*, *The Harvest Shall Come*, *World of Plenty*, *Western Approaches*—at breaking down the distributors' apathy and prejudice helped to familiarise the cinema public with the documentary idea and thus laid the foundations. Building upon these, Jill Craigie and her team have produced a praiseworthy film which will probably go a little further in getting home to an entertainment audience. And let us not forget the money (a cost four times that of a "normal" documentary of equivalent length is quoted) and the enterprise which fostered it. Credit to J. Arthur Rank.

Optimists have in earlier years seen evidence that the trade might be taking its public responsibilities, as well as its box-office returns, in serious vein; it proved slender evidence. But any new flicker of interest in this direction is to be welcomed. Documentary is going to town. But make no mistake—it has not got there yet!

PERSPECTIVE

THE word documentary, like the words Communism, Miner, Planning, Proust or Chinese Food, raises very mixed emotions in people's minds. To some it is a holy word to be spoken in the sort of voice reserved for visiting the sick or attending the funerals of unloved relatives. To others it is a word for hissing. It is odd, that after eighteen years such a very ordinary utilitarian word can still arouse such passions. Not only important but quite surprising in view of the fact that scarcely anybody knows what it means.

It has been defined often enough both by the documentary film makers and by their friends—and enemies—in other spheres of interest. But definitions have a habit of missing the full implication of the meaning: even the famous "creative treatment of actuality" was only true of certain documentaries at a certain time. It is perhaps this factor of change and growth in the meaning of the word that has caused the trouble. You can pack a lot of history into eighteen years; looking back the picture becomes a good deal clearer.

The Basis

The basis of the documentary thesis as developed in the late twenties was that the structure of Western civilisation had become so complex that ordinary people found themselves ill-adapted to understand the issues of the day and their own position and responsibility in relation to these issues. Democracy was in danger of collapse, because its citizens did not know how to make it work. The weakness, therefore, was essentially in the realm of public education and information. The vast possibilities of the new mass media (including the then rapidly developing radio) had not been spotted as the key to the problem. Film, because of its obvious mass popularity, and the vividness of the visual image, which, incidentally, remains, despite sound, the essential *lingua franca*, was an obvious choice as a medium in which to put the theory into practice.

It is significant that the opportunity arose from a specific national need—Britain's trade problem in the twenties and the international relations which went with it. A new conception of Empire was being forced on Whitehall. The formation of the Empire Marketing Board in 1926, with Sir Stephen Tallents as Secretary, was in part a reflection of the failure of successive British governments to elucidate the facts and responsibilities of Empire to the British people. Thus, while the word "marketing" provided terms of reference which were apparently narrow, the fact was that to revivify the hardening arteries of trade it was necessary to achieve a new consciousness among ordinary people in Britain and overseas.

"Bringing Alive"

During its all too brief life, the EMB succeeded in planning for the first time the co-ordination of mass media for the purposes of public information. The policy was to "bring alive" to the people at large the facts and implications of the Commonwealth structure. "Bringing alive" became an important slogan, for it meant that the information given had to be related closely to the experience of ordinary people. It had to give them a sense of participation in the Commonwealth. Abstractions were useless. What was needed was to give an excitement and vividness to the ordinary realities of day-to-day life and activity: to give, for instance, to the farm worker a sense of his close relationship with the town people who depended on his products for their breakfasts, and vice versa.

Under Tallents, the EMB developed a number of techniques. Local exhibitions were opened in provincial cities, particularly in the great manufacturing areas. These were always in the main shopping area, very often in an empty store, and usually included a cinema. Widespread poster campaigns were run, and in these the new conception of participation was indicated by the abandonment of such cold symbols as the angular Wembley lion and the adoption of the vivid figure of a British steelworker. More importantly still, the EMB established a large number of three-panelled permanent poster boards in towns and cities all over the British Isles. These were used largely to increase public consciousness and knowledge of Commonwealth affairs. The posters on these boards were designed by noted artists and became, in a sense, public picture galleries.

Both the ideology and style of EMB activities stemmed largely from the collaboration between Tallents and John Grierson, and in most respects, the work of Grierson's documentary film group within the EMB acted as a pacemaker. From the experiments and activities of the film unit came new conceptions of spreading information.

Specialisation

It was in the development of different types of films for different audience, and especially in gaining access to people outside the public cinemas, that the important distinction between background and foreground information first became clear. This was to become a vital principle in the development of the educational function of the documentary film.

The limitation of screen time available in public cinemas made it essential to find other means by which the EMB films could reach a sufficiently large cross-section of the community to make their production worth while. The institution of non-theatrical free road-shows, and of the EMB free lending library of films, provided for the needs (then hardly assessed) of both child and adult audiences. Later on, the experience gained by Grierson and his colleagues from studying the reactions of schoolchildren to their films led to the realisation that the purpose of the documentary film did not rest in the selection and treatment of the subject-matter alone, but that for any given subject it would usually be necessary to provide several films differing in perspective. Hence the formulation at this time of the foreground and background distinction. Over-simplified, this distinction is that foreground information deals with the specific, while background information deals with the more general scene in relation to which the specific is taking place. The problem of relating the background Commonwealth story to the specific day-to-day informational jobs was not, in fact, fully solved, owing largely to the overall failure in education about the Commonwealth, which was, and still is, one of the most sensational vacancies in the mental and spiritual make-up of the British electorate. More, perhaps, might have been achieved had not the EMB been abolished, with the result that its embryo information services were transferred to the GPO.

Public Relations

At the GPO, Tallents, Grierson, and the documentary group faced a new and urgent task. A new phrase—Public Relations—was taken into the documentary field. The Post Offices of Britain were a byword for inefficiency, gloominess and a general old-fashioned atmosphere. They were the front by which the public judged the Post Office, and they effectually concealed a hundred and one superbly efficient jobs. A physical job of rebuilding, such as was undertaken at the time, was not a sufficient solution. Behind it all was the question of the morale of the Post Office staff as a whole. The first terms of reference of the GPO Film Unit were, then, to provide for the staff an understanding of their individual relations to the over-all ramifications of GPO activities, to explain organisation as a whole, and to relate department to department in an exciting and imaginative manner. The first films made by the GPO Film Unit achieved something over and beyond their purpose. They were

(*continued on page* 60)

NOTES OF THE MONTH

F.A.O. and Films

THE first sentence of the first article of the Constitution of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations reads: "The Organisation shall collect, analyse, interpret, and disseminate information relating to nutrition, food and agriculture." Yet the Copenhagen conference could find no space officially for the discussion of how this could best be done, though a number of people agreed that the best plans on earth, and the best machines and the best science, are helpless without the understanding and co-operation of the great multitudes of mankind. Always excepting Sir John Orr and La Guardia, most of the delegates seemed to think only in terms of abstract organisation or detailed scientific process. Any question of the ordinary people being considered as part of the agricultural process would have seemed an intrusion to them. In fact, it looks as if the first task of F.A.O. may well be to collect, analyse, interpret and disseminate information to its own members and the governments they represent.

Not that films were absent. They were there in profusion. About 70 were sent in by Australia, Canada, U.S.A., England, Denmark and France. A conference committee consisting of Florence Reynolds, Mogens Skot-Hansen and Arthur Elton was at work a fortnight before the conference opened. The first week of the conference was devoted mainly to general shows of films, and the opportunity was taken to organise a series of showings to Danish audiences. These included batches of high-school students, teachers and students from agricultural colleges, trades unions, women's organisations, and other such groups. There were also a few general shows for delegates, and the excellently equipped conference cinema was running from morning to night, Saturdays and Sundays included.

There is no doubt that this series of shows created a great interest in the use of the film among Danish groups who have so far had little opportunity to examine the films and methods of other countries. Nevertheless, these shows did not perform the essential task of assisting delegates. Unfortunately, it had not been found possible to relate specific films to specific parts of the agenda in advance, partly because most of the films arrived very late, usually unaccompanied by dope sheets (the important British batch from the C.O.I. did not arrive till after the conference opened) and partly because the agenda of the conference was often not settled till just before the meetings were due to be held. In order to reach the delegates, it was decided to issue, at the end of the first week, an annotated catalogue of all the films held, and to offer projection facilities to run any film at any place required, either in a conference room, in the main theatre, or even in a delegate's hotel. In this way the delegates were able to select films and programmes for examination according to their particular interests. This plan was a great success, and represents an important development in the use of the film at conferences. Ideally the catalogue should have been prepared before the conference started, instead of half-way through, but since America was the only country to send films in advance, this was not possible.

Catch 'em Young

EARLIER this year we reprinted an article from *The Times* dealing with the Saturday morning shows for children. The nature and suitability of these shows is still a matter of considerable public concern. In April of this year a conference on "Children and the Cinema" was called by the National Council of Women and the British Film Institute, the proceedings of which have just been issued in printed form by the Film Institute.

This report confirms the misgivings experienced by many people who have studied the development of clubs run under the auspices of the great commercial circuits. Despite the efforts of speakers put up to defend the clubs it is patently clear from the report that the majority of people present found their criticisms of all aspects of the Saturday shows confirmed as the conference developed. No amount of whitewashing could conceal the fact that the shows are run without the guidance of trained people. The children are subjected to various types of mass hysteria and to a very dubious ideology. ("We're the boys of the Odeon, we're thousands strong we can't be wrong.") Psychologists vied with teachers and parents in condemnation of the whole set-up.

Even the films shown could hardly be called unexceptionable. The "representative" group shown at the Conference were trashy, artistically and socially. Yet, as it became clear, the revenue from these clubs is substantial, and the indirect return, viewed in terms of the inculcation of the cinema-going habit, considerable.

The Conference clearly marked a new stage in the expression of public disquiet about the way these clubs are run. It can be argued that they serve a socially useful purpose in keeping the children off the streets on Saturday mornings. But this must be set against the insidious damage to their minds which may result from the present club procedure.

The Film Societies

DESPITE all the dislocations of the war years, the film society movement has survived. Indeed, there is today a greater demand than ever for the various services which this movement can provide. Last year the New London Film Society started up with a series of Sunday programmes at the Scala, and the demand for seats exceeded all expectations. By providing a number of shows of screen classics from all countries, this Society enabled many people to achieve for the first time a perspective on cinema. This season its activities are being renewed, first with a festival of French films, together with an exhibition sent over from Paris by the Cinemathèque Française, and secondly with twelve programmes of great American films, including, *Anna Christie*, *The Wind*, *The General*, *Foolish Wives*, *Orphans of the Storm* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*.

Parallel with this opportunity to study the development of film art is the equally important opportunity to study and discuss the part played by the cinema in the social and technological problems of the day. Since its inception before the war, the Scientific Film Society movement has gained ever increasing momentum, the layman as well as the specialist evincing a keen desire to enjoy filmic analysis and discussion on all levels. The London Scientific Film Society has announced a ten months' programme, beginning in October, of scientific and documentary films. Its further activities will include special shows of research films, lectures, children's shows, and the publication of a quarterly journal. Plans are also announced for the production of experimental films by a group of members, the expressed aim being to use the film as a scientific tool "rather than in its more usual function as a medium of pictorial presentation".

Add to the work of these societies the renewed activities of similar groups in the provinces, to say nothing of the summer schools, such as those organised each summer by the Workers' Film Association, and it will be realised that the film society movement in this country is a force to be reckoned with.

WARTIME WEDDING

by John Shearman

John Shearman, a documentary film director, was during the war a member of the R.A.F. Film Unit. He found himself working alongside both feature film and documentary film technicians and he had consequently a special opportunity of observing the interaction of the two film forms

THERE seems no doubt that the British feature film has made one of those magnificent leaps forward and upward which play an important part in the development of all art forms. One of the many forces behind that leap was the pre-war development of British documentary.

The great period of true documentary was before the war. *Drifters*, *Song of Ceylon*, *Shipyard*, *Night Mail* . . . the classics of documentary were the revolutionary products of the nineteen thirties. At that time a good many people looked at them with suspicion—not unusual with revolutionary art.

The true documentary continued into the first years of the war. *Men of the Lightship*, *Coastal Command*, *Fires Were Started*, *Ack-Ack* . . . they were in the straight line of descent from *Night Mail* and *North Sea*. But nobody now was suspicious of them. It had suddenly become immensely important to depict how a small group of people, typical of many such groups, behaved in actual circumstances, circumstances of the greatest and most urgent reality. The war demanded (*inter alia*) documentary. The revolutionary, suspect, foundling child of the film industry was suddenly welcomed into the very best society and became a part of the mental life of the people.

At about the same time feature film makers in this country found themselves caught by a strange emotion. They wanted to say something sincere about people at war.

Getting Together

The two groups, feature and documentary film makers, had spent the pre-war years sniffing haughtily at each other ("Say what you like, it's not box-office", and "But it's nothing to do with real life".) Now, with the coming of war, they stopped sniffing and began to get something from each other. Documentary directors found that they needed the technical resources of the studio in order to make their films big enough to match the giant size of their subject—war. Feature film makers found themselves wanting to leave behind the fantasy-life of the popular film and turn to a life which was a good deal closer to reality: a fusion of techniques was inevitable. Other causes operated towards the same end. Documentary and feature technicians found themselves working together in the Service Units. A great documentary unit was accommodated in a requisitioned feature studio along with the R.A.F. and Army film units. The authorities (the great "They") wanted films for specific purposes, and entrusted the making of them to both groups.

Thus feature films began to acquire a flavour of the documentary—*The Foreman Went to France*, *One of Our Aircraft is Missing*, *Forty-Ninth Parallel*, *Next of Kin*. The effect of this infiltration of the documentary idea can now be traced in most of the great British features made during and just after the war—*In Which We Serve*, *San Demetrio London*, *The Way Ahead*, *Canterbury Tale*, and, outstandingly, in *Journey Together*. After the first show of this film (before its West End opening) a group of feature technicians wandered out of the theatre saying, "Of course, it's pure documentary." They were closely followed by a group of documentary technicians saying, "Of course, it's a pure feature." This was in 1945. A fusion between feature and documentary techniques and ways of thought had taken place.

The Use of Sound

The feature film makers were not the only ones affected. Something had happened to documentary film makers, too. Documentary is more than just a special technique of making short films with picture and commentary. Documentary is an idea. But it is true to say that before the war documentaries generally were short and had little or no synchronised dialogue. If documentaries get longer and use more synchronised dialogue, they become more like features. Both these things happened to documentaries during the war. They became longer because there was more to say. Why did they tend towards more synchronised dialogue?

For a number of reasons. Because, granted greater length, commentary alone was no longer adequately gripping. Because dialogue does in fact take place in the real-life equivalents to documentary situations. Because the best way to show a man giving orders (for example) is, quite simply, to show a man giving orders. Because the specialised jargon of the bomber and the gun site has its own artistic value.

For documentary film makers the need for synchronised sound brought its own practical problems. It is axiomatic that sound on location is hell. Documentary, therefore, had to go into the studio to a greater extent than had been its habit. Fortunately it managed to do so without becoming studio-bound and losing reality.

There were problems, too, for documentary writers. Dialogue must, on the whole, be written before it is shot. It must say, or imply, what has to be said or implied, yet it must be as near as possible to what would in fact be said, though it must be tighter than normal speech, and less profane. Writing it, then, is an expert job.

The Actor

A still greater problem confronted the director of this type of film. He could, with a reasonable hope of success, film a non-actor doing something. He could not, except in special circumstances, get a non-actor to speak dialogue. With the best will in the world on everybody's part, a non-actor speaking lines usually creaks a bit. There are, of course, shining examples to the contrary, and routine stuff—"Contact", "Left, left . . . steady . . . bombs gone", and the like can be perfectly satisfactory. But to ask more than that is to ask an amateur to do something for which professionals train and study during their whole working lives. The result, generally speaking, is bad. Sometimes it is unspeakably bad; sometimes there is but the vaguest suspicion that something is not quite right.

That was the problem. The immediate tendency was for documentary directors to use a professional actor now and again—not at all for his or her star-value, but simply because he did the job best. But not all professional actors did the job best. Stagey dialogue and action are as bad (in documentary) as creaky dialogue and action. The professional actor with a tradition of stage and feature work only is not the final answer.

Contact

So the two pre-war worlds of feature and documentary have, during the war, made contact. *Western Approaches* is perhaps the perfect example of the feature-like documentary. It is of feature length; it is made in Technicolor, that spoilt darling of the studios; it uses no commentary. But it was made by a documentary unit under documentary conditions. No professional actor played in it. Synchronised sound, Technicolor camera, cast and technicians went to sea in the real Atlantic, not in a tank or before a back projection screen. Is it feature? Is it documentary? Or is it, like *Journey Together*, some new fusion of both schools?

Common Ground

The two films, *Western Approaches* and *Journey Together* are an instructive comparison for, starting from opposite poles, they have arrived on common ground. In *Journey Together*, script and direction, photography and recording were carried out by people with a feature, not a documentary, training and background. Almost every part was played by a professional actor. In production the technical resources of the studio were fully and admirably employed. Back projection, model shots, tanks and so forth were used freely and fully. The editing was by a feature editor.

What is the common element in these two films which sprang from such different beginnings? It is, perhaps, that in both these films and the many others like them, real-seeming circumstances surround a small group of real-seeming people whom we get to know individually and with whom we identify ourselves to a greater or less extent. They are symbols of many people to whom similar important events are happening.

DOCUMENTARY FILM REVIEWS

Factors of Soil Fertility. *Production:* Realist Film Unit in association with Film Centre for I.C.I. *Director:* Brian Smith. *Photography:* Cyril Phillips. 22 mins.

Soil Nutrients. *Production:* Realist Film Unit in association with Film Centre for I.C.I. *Director:* Brian Smith. *Photography:* Cyril Phillips. 19 mins.

Liming. *Production:* Realist Film Unit in association with Film Centre for I.C.I. *Dirccor*: Brian Smith. *Photography:* Cyril Phillips. 12 mins.

Land Drainage. *Production:* Realist Film Unit in association with Film Centre for I.C.I. *Director:* Brian Smith. *Photography:* Cyril Phillips. 23 mins.

ON THE face of it the soil would seem to be one of the most unpromising subjects to make films about; and a good deal of credit is due to the ingenuity which has made this subject come alive.

Factors of Soil Fertility. The first film as the name implies, states the main principles of soil fertility—air and moisture for the roots, provision of a balanced diet, correction of acidity by liming, prevention of disease. It points out that the crop will be as good as the worst of these factors will allow, and by a neat use of diagram, and of speeded-up crop samples the film interprets the logic that lies behind normal farming practice. It thus sets the stage for the other three films which deal in more detail with each of the main factors of soil fertility.

Soil Nutrients. The soil is all the time becoming deficient in plant foods, due to the repeated removal of crops, or to the grazing of animals. These deficiencies must be made up, either by "natural methods", such as dunging, green manuring, or the scattering of bone meal; or by the addition of artificial fertilisers. A balance must at all times be maintained and the advantages of soil analysis are stressed.

Liming. This is a straightforward propaganda film for the use of lime when the soil needs it. It shows some of the sources of lime—chalk and carboniferous sand—the need for soil analysis in assessing the lime requirements of soil and the methods of applying it.

Land Drainage. To a layman, this is the most interesting film of the series. By means of excellent diagrams we are shown a typical catchment area with its surface drainage of streams and its underground water table. In keeping his land well drained, the farmer has to pin down the water table wherever it is likely to rise up to the surface of the land, that is, wherever it wells up to form springs when it meets impermeable rock, and when it rises to the surface in wet weather. The farmer does this by ditching, and by subsidiary mole or tile draining.

Apart from their logical exposition, what is pleasant about these four films is the feeling of sympathy they have for the farmer's day-to-day problems—the weather, labour difficulties, etc. One never has the feeling, as in so many films of the kind, that here is a council of perfection, difficult to attain. Brian Smith's own particular brand of dry humour also give the films an added lift, though one could wish the commentator had had a lighter touch. Indeed the voice of the commentator is the weakest part of these films. Under the thin disguise of a countryman's voice he still contrived to put technical agricultural terms into inverted commas. This is a familiar problem in all technical films, and it would seem to be almost better to forgo the polish of the professional commentator in favour of the knowledgeable voice of the man who does the job.

United Harvest. *Production*: Greenpark, in association with Film Centre, for the National Farmers Union. *Director*: Ralph Keene. *Photography*: George Still. *Editor*: Peter Scott. *Distribution*: G.F.D. 17 mins.

United Harvest pleads a just cause. It argues that the world's production and distribution of food should be planned on the international scale in the same way that British agriculture was planned on a national scale during the war years, and that there should be a greater understanding and co-operation between industry and agriculture.

The argument is fine but unfortunately the method of putting it across is not so happy. In attempting to tell a complicated story of this sort in terms of dialogue the producers have landed themselves with a lot of very forced conversation, much of which is merely commentary. The result of putting commentary argument into the mouth of a character destroys both the characterisation and the flow of ideas. It seems a pity that the film was not given a more straightforward treatment, with undisguised commentary instead of forcing it into a supposedly popular but most unsuitable form. All the more so, as several sequences, in the train on the Continent and in the factory canteen, show considerable skill and imagination. No doubt the film's producers will maintain that their style of treatment is to some extent justified by the wide theatrical distribution which the film is said to be achieving.

Today and Tomorrow. *Production*: World Wide for C.O.I. *Producer*: Ralph Bond. *Associate Producer*: Arthur Elton. *Director*: Robin Carruthers. *Photography*: Clifford Hornby. 40 mins.

Today and Tomorrow is a good film which only just misses being very good indeed. It is concerned with the impact of the war on the precarious economy of the Middle East and explains the methods by which the Allies averted a major famine in the face of the German Army and the German propaganda machine. It shows how these same methods may help to put the countries of the Middle East on a firmer footing in the future and at the same time help solve the wider problem of the food crisis which now faces the whole world.

In common with so many documentaries with their tendency to open on the Creation, skip gaily down the centuries, describe and analyse the contemporary scene and conclude with a rosy estimate of the future, this film tries to crowd rather too much into its forty odd minutes and ends on a note of optimism based on rather slender evidence.

It is extremely well directed and photographed and throughout there is a deep feeling of humanity for the peoples of the Middle East. A number of sequences notably the locust scenes, the story of the donkey, the first water coming down the canal and the beautiful sequence of the schoolmaster and the children planting young trees on the barren hillside, are excellent in themselves, but it is perhaps the changes in treatment (instructional, reportage, idyllic by turns) that together with an over-wide subject make this film not quite as good as one feels it might have been. It remains both interesting and moving.

Approach to Science. *Production*: Shell Film Unit for A.B.C.A. *Producers*: Geoffrey Bell and Edgar Anstey. *Director*: Bill Mason. *Photography*: Sidney Beadle. *Music*: William Alwyn. *Diagrams*: Frank Rodker and A. Shaw. *Distribution* A.B.C.A. Non-T. 28 mins.

A brief survey of a few fields in which science affects our daily life. The introduction contrasts the power of science to create and to destroy. The development of the modern trolley-bus and turbo-generator is traced historically through Volta, Oersted, Sturgeon, and Faraday. The sampling and testing of town water supplies, and the hand fertilisation of wheat at an Agricultural Research station are shown. The principles of Radar and of the cathode ray oscillograph are explained, Next, the applications of mass radiography and statistical methods to the problem of tuberculosis, and finally a glimpse of child psychology to represent the social sciences.

The film will be shown to all ranks of all troops. The object of the film is to pose questions for discussion rather than supply didactic answers.

The approach to science is through thirty bars of music, not the sinister stuff that usually accompanies film scientists at work but why music at all? In general the film is a straightforward account of a few aspects of scientific method. The topics are well chosen and well linked together, and it is clear that considerable thought has been given to accuracy. The historical sequence is discreetly done and there are no mystical dancing molecules and apparatus-packed laboratories which were a regrettable feature of "Handle with Care". Radar is explained by analogy with sound waves, but it was a mistake to attempt to put across the complexities of the cathode ray oscillograph in a film of this type.

In spite of linking science with everyday life one still gets the impression: Science is Doing-something-with-special-apparatus, and here are our scientists and non-scientists in water-tight compartments. It should have been made clear that science is an attitude of mind and method of approach, not merely a technique to be acquired. However, it was a good point to end with the commentator's question: "How can each one of us become his own scientist?" followed by a sequence in a public library, and the film should achieve its object of starting discussion.

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SOCIETY, SCIENCE AND MOVIE

by a Psychiatrist

ONE OF the more unexpected results of the war was the discovery by psychologists and psychiatrists that in order to get anywhere in the social science field, they could no longer work in glorious isolation, but would have to collaborate with those concerned with specific problems. A second, and perhaps more unexpected result was the mutual discovery by these specialists and some of the documentary film makers that they possessed in common the desire to present to the world knowledge about human problems, as their conscious contribution to social progress. This discovery resulted from the collaboration between the Army psychologists and psychiatrists, the Directorate of Army Kinematography and the Ministry of Information on such films as *Personnel Selection—Recruits, Personnel Selection—Officers, The New Lot* (out of which was born *The Way Ahead*) and various films on morale and war psychiatry. The Army group who collaborated in these film ventures now form the core of the newly created Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. They are anxious that the collaboration with film makers, achieved during the war, may be continued.

It may be thought unusual that a group of specialists studying the deep recesses of the mind should seek to collaborate with such groups as documentary film makers. However, the trend in social science is towards dealing with problems in active relationship with other groups concerned with similar problems. In so far, then, as documentary films attempt to portray living human beings and their problems they will secure the warm support of the psychiatrist and social scientist. It is in this light that the Tavistock Institute recognises in the documentary film a powerful ally in presenting to the public social problems and tentative solutions. It is likely, too, that these specialists may be of assistance to the documentary film maker, not only by providing technical advice and assistance, but also by bringing to his notice the wealth of human material obtained through the study and treatment of real people and communities.

Before discussing some of the fields of work of the Institute applicable to documentary problems, it will be useful to indicate some of the roots from which the new organisation has grown.

The Development of the Institute

Early in the war, psychiatrists began their work in the Army by treating individuals, officers and men, who had developed a variety of disturbances owing to the strains of the new situations in which they found themselves, and the new demands made upon them. Further than this, the psychiatrists hoped in time to be able to prevent psychological disturbances from arising at all. As a result, several of them found themselves more and more concerned with questions of the general well-being of groups within the Army. That is to say, they tended to become "social psychiatrists", or "sociatrists". In its turn, this outlook led to the development of selection procedures for both officers and men. From it arose, too, a new approach to battle conditioning, battle training and tactics, new methods in psychological warfare, both in military intelligence and in broadcasting, and new techniques for solving problems of repatriation and resettlement. In addition, practical contributions were made to the assessment and maintenance of morale and discipline.

While the work done in the Army necessarily had many features that were specific to the military group, many aspects were obviously of a general nature in their application to the welfare of all kinds of groups. In particular, Army experience seemed peculiarly applicable to many of the practical problems of social reconstruction. As a result of requests from many civilian bodies, it became clear that some sort of civilian organisation was called for. So it was that the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations was established, with the assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation. It is the goal of this group eventually to become self-supporting on the basis of practical work done for the community.

Many of the problems with which the Institute will be concerned are in line with problems treated by documentary film makers. In general these problems may be described as the study of human relationships within industrial, cultural and family groups. For the want of a better word, the term "sociatry" has been used to designate this field of work. It is intended to include all aspects of the treatment of group or social problems, and in this sense the psychiatrist and documentary film maker are equally "social doctors" or "sociatrists".

"Sociatry" and Documentary

The practice of sociatry came originally from the group treatment of neurotic patients. The group discussion techniques used in this field were found to be applicable to many other kinds of group. They have been applied to such varied purposes as officer selection and current affairs discussions. From the study of these varied applications of group methods is rapidly emerging a new and better understanding of the structure, development and requirements for smooth working of groups in general. It is possible that the results may be applicable to the problems of group discussions in relation to films.

There are, however, other more general applications of group techniques to problems which, because of widespread public interest, may interest the documentary film maker. One such is the increasing public interest in the family aroused by the widespread family resettlement problem, the changing status of women and mothers, and anxiety over the birthrate. Here we would attempt to treat the family as a group in relation to the rest of the community, rather than dealing with, say, an anxious mother or a delinquent child in isolation. Another example is that of assisting in raising the productive efficiency of industry through the establishment of smooth working human relationships. Here group techniques can be applied, for example, to the removal of emotional stresses due say to poor foreman-worker relations, or to the eliciting of information concerning the attitude of workers in a particular industry to the rest of the country —a problem which apparently applies to the coal mining industry today.

Another field in which the study of human relations is of value is in the study of culture patterns. This was begun during the war through the study of various aspects of the morale and psychological structure of the German Wehrmacht. This resulted, among other things, in the definition of an authoritarian personality type corollated with Nazi ideology, perhaps defining the prototype of the potential Fascist in our own midst. The method used in this study provides a possible link between intimate personality study of political attitudes, and group dynamics. It is intended to continue these studies in relation to such problems as the domestic behaviour of parents and the personality development of their children, and the effects of stresses resulting from the influence of authoritarian characters in key positions in industry and other groups.

Some of the above problems may perhaps lend themselves in one way or another to film treatment. Also the general sociatric approach may be of value in giving a flavour or orientation to some particular film. This, however, raises the question of the methods by which collaboration between the specialist in human relations and the documentary film maker can be achieved. Tentative beginnings might be made along the lines of uncovering problems requiring urgent film treatment, discussion about actual scripts, technical consultation on the film treatment of specific problems, and discussions concerning the psychological aspects of film content in order to assist director and actor towards a more penetrating analysis of underlying themes.

Film Research

In addition to collaboration between the specialist and documentary film producer in attacking common problems along the lines suggested above, the Institute is deeply interested in one other project which is equally of concern to the documentary film maker—that of fundamental research into the psychological mechanisms underlying the effect which the film has on the audience. Initial research by other workers in the field has already fortified the intuitive knowledge that the film in fact does *something* to the audience and has even to a certain extent revealed *what* the film is capable of doing. But there still remains the deeper question of *how* the film operates on the audience—the dynamics of the interplay between the film and the observer.

It must be admitted that some of the film research conducted by psychologists in the past has suffered from an academic quality, due, perhaps, to its being carried out with too little regard for practical problems. The Institute would hope,

(*continued on page* 64)

GRIERSON TAKES STOCK

Address by John Grierson to New York Film Council

BEFORE I go on to indicate the opportunities and the responsibilities of the documentary film in the United States I think it would be well to indicate the position reached in two allied countries: Canada and the United Kingdom. In the U.K., in contrast to the United States, there is no public discussion nor even public thought of giving up the government information service. What has happened there is that the wartime Ministry of Information has been disbanded and in its place there is a Central Office of Information to provide all the departments of government with the supply of films, exhibitions, posters and publications that they require.

One significant point in the British scene is the wide knowledge and recognition by Government Ministers of the work which the documentary film has done over the past fifteen years. I have been long associated with Ministerial interests in information, but I have never known a time or an occasion when senior Ministers were so intimately aware of the value and necessity of the information media and of the documentary film in particular as men like Sir Stafford Cripps or Mr. Herbert Morrison are today. Much may be expected from this and I have some reason to know that they are not considering the media as media of mere propaganda, but in the best sense as media for the encouragement of public discussion and understanding. One evidence of this is the universal approval of the government's decision to maintain its very intensive system of non-theatrical distribution. This operates on a regional basis and maintains both decentralised libraries and travelling projection units.

What may appear equally important from an American point of view is the possibility and even likelihood of the government developing a central commission for the *total* development of the documentary and educational use of film: that is to say for the development of documentary and educational films in every form, and apart from the information needs of the departments of government. I think it would be worth a side bet to say that an attempt at total national planning in this field will be made within the next year or at most two years. I would not be surprised to see a financial corporation under government auspices devoted to the financing of approved projects both for theatrical and non-theatrical distribution.

I think we must expect some very articulate results from the United Kingdom in the next period. This, of course, is partly due to the present economic position of Britain and its dire need to use every medium of communication in maintaining the spirit of total effort. But it is also due to a spirit of understanding between the government and the media of communication which is not quite paralleled elsewhere. In England today there is not so much talk as you would expect of what is private enterprise and what is public necessity. The main emphasis everywhere is public necessity and it is certainly not least evident in the film trade. Private enterprise, including the Rank interests, is deeply involved in the production of documentary and educational films, yet my impression is that private and public interests both will be freely and easily related in a common desire for national planning.

NEW DUTIES OF INFORMATION

IN CANADA the situation is somewhat different. I only cite it because it has already become an example to the smaller countries and may be expected to show the way to countries like Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Norway, Czechoslovakia and the South American countries, not to mention all the Dominions. There, because of the insufficiency of the home production industry, the government has taken the initiative and set up a very considerable production and distribution service. Last year the Canadian government produced more than three hundred films. It maintained its own National Film Board with a staff of some eight hundred people, but it also did much to encourage the growth of outside independent units. It is important in the Canadian example to note that it provided films of a public information nature on every level of distribution, both theatrical and non-theatrical, and that it maintained a non-theatrical distribution probably more intensive than any in the world. This example is, I think, likely to be followed by the other middle and smaller countries which do not have a highly developed film industry. I think it likely the amount of documentary and newsreel material emanating from governments all over the world will not decrease as some suppose because of the end of the war, but in the future will greatly increase: and that shorts distributors and newsreel distributors everywhere will have an enormous fund of world observation to draw upon.

As to the United States itself, I must repeat that the duties placed upon the documentary and educational film makers and distributors are greater than ever before. Unfortunately there is a gentle sense of something being mixed up at the present moment and it is only because I am an alien that I don't use the word confused. The OWI has gone and the new government policies in the matter of film usage are not yet declared. The relationship between the film industry and the government's information needs are still obscure. In the United States you have not yet arrived at a clear definition of the relationship between private enterprise and public responsibility in the matter of the mass communications, nor specifically have you yet defined where the government's information needs and the interests of the film industry coincide. It appears to the outsider an unnatural and unnecessary estrangement between the two, which must place America at some disadvantage as it communicates with countries with a more unified mind regarding their national responsibilities. But what strikes the outsider most is the fact that with so much in the way of technical skill and brightness of ideas and trained personnel, so relatively little in the totality should emerge so far as the directive use of the film is concerned. The separate efforts may be brilliant but they are not co-ordinated or planned. This is particularly true in distribution, where one could hope that the needs of public education could be more authoritatively and more academically served than they are now by a hundred agencies each pursuing its own opportunist line of development. If there is one field which ought to be indivisible it is the field of education. It suggests something a little more mature than the system we now have: something in the way of a federation: something in the way of professional standards: something in the way of a common effort to a common end.

It seems a greater pity to have disunity among the film makers and film distributors in this field, as we realise the great challenge to the medium which present political circumstances present. New problems of communication beset us as we have to make over our national society and our international society into a truly co-operative society. Economic events are such that interdependence has of necessity to become part and parcel of our imaginations. Every international headline today calls for a measure of dramatic elucidation which will reach to the smallest hamlet and the furthest farm. The formation of UNO and all its instruments—social, economic, cultural, scientific, labour and educational—implies in each country a *duty* to put the instruments of communication at the service of its aims and ideals. What it implies is that we must in each country so mobilise our media that we will be able to meet the educational challenge.

It is important that the film should not be behindhand. The capacity of the Press to communicate between nations is vastly increased with the development of radio: so vastly increased that today the cable system is for all practical Press purposes out of date. The broadcasting service has similarly developed spectacular capacities for international communication and will do still more with the development of frequency modulation and facsimile. The publishers and particularly the visual publishers through various new technical devices have it in their hands to spread the popular presentation of public affairs all over the world. These fields are far better organised and far better financed than we are for the purpose. It would be a pity

if America's most vital medium for the international communication of public observation and public comment were to fail because of a piecemeal, scrappy and essentially amateur approach.

Some central organisation of the documentary and educational effort is now necessary, and if I may say so it is now vitally necessary. What form it should take I am not going to attempt to say at this time, but I beg that you will think about it. I see the entertainment industry very properly girding itself for its new responsibilities. I simply say that it is time the documentary and educational film industry did likewise. I am not thinking simply of an association of documentary film individuals such as you have had in the past. I am thinking of a highly ordered federation of units comprising all the production, distribution and equipment interests involved in the wise and responsible development of our medium in the public interest.

A SIX-POINT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

THERE ARE certainly many fields of work in which we are now deficient and if you will permit me I suggest to you a six-point programme for our better development.

We need to do a whole lot better *with our information services*. The general conception of documentary is not nearly well enough known. The contribution we have to make to education in correlating widely separate events, in giving dramatic shape to wide and disparate areas of observation is not appreciated fully by educationists. The contribution the film has to make in bridging the gap between the classroom and the community, the citizen and the wider economic world on which he depends, has not been sufficiently grasped.

A new generation of teachers has to be developed which will more fully understand the *difference between curriculum pedagogy and the larger work of creating a civic imagination fit for the new co-operative world.* We have today no sufficient system of information by which the Press and the radio will know of our work. We have no sufficient system by which, through lectures and film groups throughout the country, *an orderly understanding and use of the medium is developed.* Since in fact we cannot each of us afford an information service, we need a common one. One important part of that service ought to be a richer interchange of opinions and ideas than we have today. With so many writers and speakers amongst us, it is, I think, disappointing that so little criticism of the first order is written amongst us. There was a time when we used to write for the *Sun* and the *Tribune* and *The Times* and the trade papers and the academic and art magazines. The tradition still lasts I notice in England where the documentary people may have forgotten a lot of things but have not forgotten to do their weekly chore in film writing. It is especially important today to renew this sense of criticism. Much has been learned technically during the war years particularly in the pedagogic field. It should be put down for everyone to learn from. The new technical developments in high-speed communication which must revolutionise the mind—and I hope the manners—of the world are so important that they demand the fullest analysis and appreciation. The relationship between film and the other visual media of presentation now developing in the educational film and particularly in the field of adult education, also calls for the fullest critical understanding.

I wonder, too, if we understand *nearly enough about liaison work* or are sufficiently organised to open up the many fields of sponsorship which lie available to us. Several of the Foundations, including Rockefeller, Sloane and Harmon have already made a contribution in this field, and I hope that International Film Associates may be of some service in this same direction. Certainly we have to understand *now and on* that we cannot simply wait around in our odd corners hoping for films to turn up, without continuity either of production or of industrial security. If we really mean to make a truly national contribution to public information the whole business of sponsorship has to acquire a measure of national planning. I mean by this that somewhere and somehow we have to create a service *which looks creatively into the information needs of government departments*, national associations, cities and industries and *learns* how to relate them to the the public educational needs of the country and the world. This I beg you to believe is not just a salesman's task and it will be a tragedy if it ever becomes just a salesman's task. I have only to cite to you the classical examples of good liaison work in the past to indicate how creative and fruitful a proper approach can be. We have had examples in the past with *the slum clearance and social betterment films made for the fuel companies;* the *medical films done* for the chemical corporations. Similarly during the war the selling of war loan was turned to economic education; the elimination of absenteeism was turned to films on housing and health and labour relations in industrial communities and the improvement of agricultural production standards was turned to a real consideration of the sociology of rural living. It is not just that the possibilities in this liaison field are enormous. *It is in my view crucial that we shall actually organise for them and on some centralised basis if we are to make anything o the documentary opportunity on a national scale*

NEED FOR A COMMON ORGANISATION

I AM GOING to be blessedly short on the other points. We need a campaign among producers for a better understanding of distribution and the laws of distribution. I hope we can stop for ever a practice, based no doubt on misfortune, under which films are made without any clear system of distribution in mind: where they fall between theatrical and non-theatrical and get neither; where films are too long for either the one or the other, or are not geared to the style of one or the other. We ought all, I think, to know enough now to avoid the mistakes of the thirties in which so much production excitement finished in so much distribution disappointment. I have a notion that there are enough examples in the old and much maligned film industry to indicate how producers and distributors can get together for their mutual benefit.

I hope among other things that *we shall soon be able to develop a proper evaluation service for this wide and complex field of ours.* It is just about time that we knew what has been done in fields like, say, medicine, public health and rural sociology—just about time that we knew what is good and what is bad and where the gaps lie that have to be filled. That task I bequeath to such bodies as the Library of Congress, the American Film Council, the National Board of Review and the Museum of Modern Art. It would be a service to us all of the highest order and not least it would be a service of the highest order to the United Nations.

We ought similarly to have an orderly liaison service with the entertainment film industry and particularly in respect of newsreel and theatrical shorts. Our interest is at many points a common interest. We have much to give them and much also to get from them, and in the long run they must represent a level of approach to which we cannot be indifferent. This will be increasingly so as we come to operate for governments and for national interests whose material is without question of public account.

But, finally, I shall have said my piece if I say that what we need above all is a unified and orderly system of approach to our common problems. We have been too much disunited in the past. From what I hear we have been too much divided on political issues, professional issues and aesthetic issues and all the rest of it. All I know is that disunited the documentary and educational developments will go on being unfit for the great opportunity that lies before it; and it may be that people with lesser ideas but a better sense of order will swallow it up. I would not be surprised. So far as I am concerned, I have seen great *measures of unity developed elsewhere in a common spirit of endeavour and a common spirit of sacrifice and with a deep underlying notion that education and public purpose are in the end indivisible.* I think it possible that we can make all allowance for the differences of view which make for a vital society *and still achieve that common organisation amongst us which would make something nationally and internationally significant of the medium which we have in our hands and to which I know we are all devoted.*

MALAYAN ROAD-SHOW

by a Correspondent

TWENTY-ODD miles from Kuala Lumpur is the township of Klang and it was here that I saw my first mobile cinema at work in Malaya. The show was to be given in an amusement park which is a common feature of Malayan towns. They are a cross between Coney Island and the Glyndebourne Festival. In connection with a War Exhibition the Public Relations Dept. of Malaya had announced a free cinema show in the park grounds and a space had been provided by the delighted Chinese proprietor whose desire to be helpful was not unnaturally mixed with an eye to business. The show was due to commence at 8 p.m. so at 7.30 I made my way through a dense crowd of people, Indian, Chinese, and Malays, with a sprinkling of British troops, towards the cinema site. By dint of much pushing I at last managed to reach the cinema truck, a three-tonner equipped with a 35 mm. projector built inside the van. Drawn up alongside was a public address van with two enormous speakers mounted on top, and about 100 feet away was the screen lashed to bamboo uprights. At the rear of the screen was the fence enclosing the park, one had to look closely to identify it as a fence because of the incredible number of children draped over it. About 2,000 people were gathered in front of the screen looking solemnly at it and entirely oblivious of the indescribable din going on round them. My heart sank a little at the competition we had to face. Within 20 yards on either side of the enclosure were thirty or forty sideshows plus a cabaret and a raised platform upon which Malays were dancing the *rongeng*, a popular Malay dance, accompanied by the appropriate music. Promptly at eight the show started and the opening music of the first film joined the appalling volume of sound. Judging by audience size we were the star attraction but, how much of this was due to the fact that our show was free is difficult to say. Our method of presentation was perhaps not all that the purists of visual education could desire, but our main defence must be that it suited the customer. The film was an M.O.I. short commentated by Leslie Mitchell, whose honeyed voice was received with impassive faces by the audience of Chinese, Malays, Tamils, Sikhs and Eurasians. Closely following Mitchell's commentary was the commentator sitting in the P.A. Van and translating in Malay, the language understood by the great majority of people in Malaya. Although he had a powerful amplifier and the assistance of Mitchell he had absolutely no chance against the locals operating the side-shows who seemed to double their own volume of sound in order to hold their own against us, all done in a most friendly manner. But our trump card was the movie, nothing would shift the audience once the show had started. If they grasped the commentary they gave no sign of it, most of them being too busy explaining to each other what it was all about. I worked my way through the crowd looking at the wonderful variety of faces gazing intently at the screen, here a Chinese woman of the poorer class with a sleeping baby on her back, here a bearded Sikh, there a colourfully dressed Malay girl, near the screen a beautifully dressed Chinese in a white suit of European cut with his girl friend dressed in a three-quarter length frock with the slit side which many Chinese girls favour. It struck me then the commentating was superfluous at such a show, some of the films explained themselves while others were obviously beyond their comprehension but still they kept their eyes glued to the screen.

The show took an hour and a half and by the end of that time the audience had increased by 50 per cent until a solid mass of humanity was wedged in front of the screen. After the show they all trooped off home and as I rode homewards through the night I determined to learn Malay as soon as possible, if only to find out what they were talking about during the show. It is truly amazing to give a show near a native village which looks incapable of yielding more than a handful of an audience, only to find hundreds assembled by the time we are ready to start. Maybe they don't understand the commentary, but they are seeing something of the outside world after four years under the Japanese.

REVIEWS

(*continued from page* 54)

The New Mine. G.B. Instructional for the British Council. *Director*: Irene Wilson. 18 mins.

Is it always the sponsor, or is it sometimes the over-zealous contractor, who insists on gilding the lily? Comrie Colliery in Fife is as up to date as anything in Britain, but, some time after this film describing it had been produced, your reviewer, who also wished to shoot there, was told bluntly by Dr. William Reid, the Managing Director of the colliery group, that he could only do so provided that he promised not to paint the place as perfect. "This is only a start," said Dr. Reid; "it is an experiment, from which we can learn to do much better."

But *The New Mine* finds everything at Comrie (even the ventilation system, which has been obligatory in all pits for many years) the highest pinnacle of achievement. And, curiously enough, in its enthusiasm it fails to make the most of those things of which Comrie is really proud. The surface at Comrie is a model for future mines, but the pretty shots do not attempt an explanation. The underground layout, with main haulage roads driven out level from the shaft-bottom irrespective of the rising and dipping coal-seams, so that coal can be brought back from points near the faces in forty-ton trains behind diesel-locomotives, is the most promising single improvement in British mining practice advocated by the Reid Report, but it is not even mentioned in the film.

Of course, we *see* the diesel-locomotives, and the skip-winding system, and the long and short-wall cutters, and the duckbill loaders, and the modern screening and washery plant; but it is all machinery for machinery's sake (usually presented without explanatory long-shot at that), and we are left little the wiser as to its inter-relating purpose. Your reviewer's attitude may seem hard on a film, which at the least is positive,

which gives some impression of what modern coal-mining can be like, but the coal problem is too serious for this kind of superficiality. If *The New Mine* is intended for general audiences, it may lead them to suppose that all mines are like this nowadays, and that the miner is continually grumbling about nothing. If it is intended for showing to miners and people in mining areas it is not technical enough, and its complacent commentary will convince nobody. So where does it get us? Your reviewer sat up and took notice when the film announced that output is 1,000 tons a day, but that the colliery was designed to produce 400 tons an hour. Why the discrepancy? And how to attract sufficient labour even to the most up-to-date mines in Britain was yet one more problem to which the film turned a blind eye.

Vegetable Insects. National Film Board of Canada. *Director*: Evelyn Cherry. *Distribution*: Non-T. 16 mm. 20 mins.

Shot on 16 mm. Kodachrome, with excellent colour values and great clarity, this is one of the best films of its type yet made. Evelyn Cherry (one of the pioneers of the documentary film movement and better known here as Evelyn Spice) has painstakingly and also imaginatively filmed the life and habits of most of the major insect pests, together with the main methods of destruction and control. Although the film was made for Canadian agricultural communities, much of it is highly relevant to this country, and all of it is fascinating.

Photographically the film is striking; it depends more on ultra close-ups than on actual micro-photography, and it must have involved endless patience to achieve the pin-sharp images of caterpillars, grubs, aphides, etc. Some of the sequences are dramatic in their impact, notably the fight between two parasites over an insect victim, and the devouring of a grasshopper by a praying mantis.

It is a pity that the commentary is not up to the standard of the rest of the film, it tries to say too much in too short a time. But the visuals do most of the talking, and to very good effect.

It is to be hoped that this film is only the first of a series. A film or films on fruit pests would be of great value and interest.

Old Wives' Tales. Halas Batchelor. *Director*: John Halas. *Music*: Matyas Seiber. *Distribution*: C.F.L. 9 mins.

This film sets out to expose three popular superstitions "Ne'er cast a clout till May be out"; "You've got to eat a peck of dirt before you die"; and "Night air is harmful".

It tackles the job by means of cartoon and diagram, and is aimed at grown-up audiences in a spirit of "How ridiculous and old-fashioned are the people who believe these things—figures of a cartoonist's fun!" For this sort of approach to an audience the cartoon convention is good—far better than live acting could be.

The main character is a small boy (reminiscent of a monochrome Pinnochio) on whose innocent person three old wives—Greataunt, Cook and Nurse—practice their harmful health principles. Greataunt swaddles him in mufflers under a blazing sun; Cook discourages him from washing his dirty hands before a meal, and also leaves the food uncovered so that it is fouled by flies from the uncovered dustbin; Nurse closes the windows of his bedroom against the harmful night air. The grown-up cartoon figures, excellently original creatures owing nothing to Disney, are interrupted by the voice of Reason (played by Commentator), who explains with the aid of animated diagrams the virtues of dressing to suit temperature and activity; and of food cleanliness and fresh air at all times.

Of these straight explanations the first is the least successful, as the diagram of the sweating skin is far too complicated and overloaded to be convincing. The second, which does not depart from the cartoon convention, is probably the best. "*Night* air is harmful" is the third hypothesis which has to be disproved; the film only shows that "Air is good", leaving it open to the half-educated to object, "Ah, but *night* air is different because flowers breathe out carbon dioxide at night."

More films exposing erroneous contemporary accepted ideas, not only in the health sphere, would be welcome.

Your Children and You. Realist Film Unit. *Producers*: John Taylor and Alex Shaw. *Director*: Brian Smith. *Camera*: A. E. Jeakins. *Music*: William Alwyn. *Distribution*: C.O.I. Non-T. 30 mins.

It would be difficult to think of a trickier job than to make a film instructing parents on their relations and behaviour to their children; parents are notoriously ready to be insulted or irritated on this question ("Mother knows best"), and the whole issue of the parental instinct *vis à vis* scientific discovery and knowledge is raised—more particularly since the field of child psychology is still at a very empirical stage.

In this film Brian Smith has surmounted these problems with the greatest success. He has avoided the new-fangled and the old-fashioned with equal skill, and by dishing up his instruction with a mixture of real humour and salty commonsense, he has avoided all offence. Throughout the film the handling of both children and parents is directorially admirable, and it is one of the first occasions in which the camera has consistently been used to present everything from the child's point of view. The film diverts as well as teaches. Alwyn's score is exactly right, commenting, where necessary, with wit and sympathy, and effacing itself otherwise.

Your Children and You, like the earlier films on Children's Eyes, Ears, etc., points to a whole field of production which has hardly as yet been scratched. It is to be hoped the job will go on.

Catalogue of Films of General Scientific Interest. *Compiled by the Scientific Film Association—Aslib* 1946. 5*s*.

The Scientific Film Association is to be congratulated on its first major publication. This is the most ambitious film catalogue yet published in Britain. It lists just on six hundred titles. Each film is sypnosised, and a great many of them are critically appraised. No less than sixty-five sources of scientific films are listed and in a useful introduction, the S.F.A. cataloguing and appraisal system is explained. The films are listed in alphabetical order, and the titles are classified under subjects in a separate index.

The Central Film Library has issued a supplementary list of films. This may be obtained, post free, from the Imperial Institute, London, S.W.7. It contains all films added to the Ministry of Information and Central Office of Information collections since the issue of the last catalogue in 1944.

PERSPECTIVE

(*continued from page* 51)

of just as much interest to the general public as to the staff of the General Post Office. In other words, the original documentary thesis—that people needed a sense and understanding of their participation in any and all activities of the State—was proved to be true in a different context from that of the EMB. Once proved, this thesis was obvious enough, for who were the post office staff if not the ordinary people of Britain in their connotation as workers? Hence the morale job of the films was doubled: for as far as GPO staff was concerned, they not only saw their jobs in a new light, they also saw themselves being seen in a new light by their fellow-citizens. Thus, the internal needs of a single department came to be equated with the general needs of public enlightenment—a fact which, as will be seen, was of significance in other fields.

Again, the specific needs of the GPO were further examined by the documentary group, and wider terms of reference were found. The communications system of the GPO was world-wide, especially in terms of airmail and radio, and it was only a short and very logical step from the technical communications networks of the GPO to the wider idea of communications as a function in international relations. There were no frontiers, no customs barriers, for radio. The GPO, then, largely through its films, found itself moving into wider and wider fields.

Commercial Relations

Meanwhile, the bigger commercial organisations in Britain began to look for extensions of their operations in the then comparatively new field of public relations. The most notable example of this was the gas industry, which was beginning to suffer from the fact that it was, by comparison with electricity, being regarded by the public as an outdated and rather Victorian affair. The documentary solution to the problem was to relate the function of the gas industry to the whole area of public well-being. It was realised that a total improvement of community amenities meant a total improvement in the affairs of gas. So gas moved into the public welfare field, with sociological film studies of national problems and remedies, such as slum clearance, nutrition, education, local government, kitchen design, cooking methods, and so on. Almost overnight, they became identified in the public mind with progressive policies, and even received unsolicited praise as public servants in a *Times* leader. Their own problem was on the way to solution, and, at the same time, a notable contribution to public enlightenment had been made.

Other organisations acted in a similar way. Oil, through a documentary unit set up by Shell, produced the first film expositions of basic engineering principles ever made, and then branched out into other aspects of technology, such as scientific fruit growing, the mechanisation of agriculture, and so on. Imperial Airways in their own terms paralleled the communications story of the GPO; and many other examples could be quoted.

The rapidly growing demand involved a considerable expansion of the documentary movement. While the unit at the GPO remained, a number of production units, together with a central focusing point (Film Centre) were

formed. The non-theatrical system of distribution was adopted by the commercial sponsors, who used the road-show system and also operated their own free libraries in the same manner as the Government unit. The annual audience figure was rising towards the 10 million mark.

To the general public these documentary films often came to mean a chance of democratic discussion which had not, in any imaginative terms, been available to them before. It is to be noted that this new audience was the same audience as saw the feature pictures in the public cinemas. But they were in a different mood—a mood not of relaxation, but a mood of active participation. They wanted to know more, to discuss more, and to take part in the action arising from discussion—which is the basis of democracy.

The contribution of documentary to the international scene was considerable at this time. Groups appeared in other countries, not least in the U.S.A., and there was a growing exchange of ideas and personnel. Of special significance was the invitation issued to John Grierson and Basil Wright by the ILO in 1938 to draw up a report on the international exchange of films of public enlightenment. Although the war curtailed action on this report, it remains important as having enumerated the essential factors on which today UNO and UNESCO are basing their operations.

Hitherto the British Government had shown few signs of understanding the possibilities of a wider system of public information than that represented by the GPO Film Unit. The BBC and the Ministry of Labour had made use of the GPO Film Unit on one occasion each, the former to sponsor a feature-length film on its activities (this was a box-office success), and the latter to sponsor a short film on the work of its Labour Exchanges. Other than this, however, it was the commercial and industrial sponsors, and to a lesser degree the GPO Film Unit, which made the major contribution to the progressive use of documentary techniques in the public service.

Nevertheless, by 1938, it became clear to the Chamberlain Government that something was needed to counter the brilliantly organised and highly successful propaganda machine developed by Hitler and Goebbels, and also that in the event of war a co-ordinated information service would be essential. Accordingly, the BBC began to develop its overseas broadcasts, and preparations were made for the establishment of a Ministry of Information. Here, unfortunately, a grave mistake was made. War with Germany was inevitable, and yet the Government was reluctant to involve itself in a Ministry of Information as a going concern. It was obvious to anyone in the information field that a great deal of spade work was needed to set up such a Ministry, and that time was running out; but the Cabinet decision was to form only a skeleton organisation, whose task was to do a little vague thinking and to draw up plans for the formation of a real Ministry "in the event of war".

For this mistake Britain paid dearly in the first year of World War II. In September, 1939, a period of chaos, the Ministry of Information was formed, in a flurry of directives and counter-directives and a flood of staff appointments which, by and large, served only to overload the Ministry with desk-holders and chair-squatters. The BBC, according to plan, scattered itself over Britain, and did in fact get going on a wartime basis with a success which was not paralleled elsewhere. But in the MOI itself such confusion prevailed that all other branches of information

came to a standstill, or were otherwise stultified (for instance, it was now that the famous poster appeared: "*Your* courage, *Your* cheerfulness, will bring *Us* Victory"). First casualties of this confusion were the documentary units; not only did the commercial sponsors almost all close down their film activities, but the MOI failed (partly through muddle and partly through malice on the part of certain officials) to make any use of documentary; even the GPO Unit was ignored, and its first war film (*The First Days*) was made on the Unit's own initiative and without official authorisation.

In the summer of 1940 Britain was isolated, and stood alone against an apparently irresistible Germany. Just as this total danger united the people for the first time for twenty years, so it forced cohesion on to the information services. The MOI was now restaffed and the key posts filled by capable people. And at this point there was official realisation of what had long been plain—that the methods and techniques of the documentary group (not merely in terms of film, but in terms of a constructive approach to all problems of public information) provided a key weapon on the information battlefront. In particular, the system of non-theatrical distribution, and the ancillary services of pamphlets, exhibitions, etc., which went with it, had been developed by documentary both through the GPO and the commercial sponsors to a point at which all the Government needed to do was to expand and enlarge the existing machinery; there was no need to create something from scratch.

The rapid expansion and subsequent achievements in the field are now well known, and there is no need to describe them in detail. It is perhaps sufficient to say that output rose to a productivity of 200 reels of cut negative a year, that non-theatrical distribution achieved an annual audience of 24,000,000 covering all sections of the community, and that widespread theatre showings, both free and paid for, were achieved.

The basic problems of information (and therefore of informational films) in Britain during the war followed three major phases (*a*) the 1940 crisis, (*b*) total defence, and total effort leading to offence, (*c*) the residual achievement in terms of the "new world after the war". The first phase was simple. The impact of isolation and danger created unity, and the problem of information was only to focus and direct this sense of unity. It was necessary to provide rapid and certain information on short-term levels—about rationing, post-blitz community services, and so on. It was necessary to explain general war circumstances in their local reference. It was necessary to give the world overseas, and particularly the United States, a firm picture of British steadfastness and determination under attack. In all these efforts considerable success was achieved.

The Second Phase

By 1941, with the defeat of the original Luftwaffe, came the second and longest phase. The simple situation of the previous year no longer obtained. The British people were in for a long hard grind, and the mobilisation of total effort and total productivity could be neither achieved nor maintained by short-term pep talks in any media. To maintain the morale of combatants who are in fact the whole of a nation, the mere message "Defeat the Enemy" is not valid over a long period. Reasons must be given. From the people themselves must be expressed, through the State, not merely what is to be done, but also

why. The why is not an easy question—it goes to the roots of a people's thought and feeling. The result of unity achieved under the stimulus of extreme danger is in the end a deep and disturbed questioning of the structure and activities of the State. So in Britain men and women in the light of their new-found unity looked with new eyes on the weary and dislocated society in which they had been living, and asked whether, after the war, they were going to find themselves back where they began, or not?

It was therefore essential to express these and similar feelings through the public information services of the State, for the needs of the total war effort were such that the problem could not be ignored (and the magnitude of the problem was subsequently to be demonstrated by the result of the 1945 General Election). Considerable freedom was therefore achieved (though not without some vicious battles with less imaginative Civil Servants) in the expression by the State of the desires of the people, even when those desires were not to the political liking of Ministers. This was the main and continuing victory of the information services of Britain, and was more and more reflected in them from the days of Priestley's first broadcasts until the end of the war with Germany.

Special Services

Corollary aspects were the general penetration of the community through the special interests of its groups. At an early stage this documentary technique was adopted in all branches of information and public enlightenment. Special services were provided for the agricultural community, not only to farmers, but also to farm workers, to the Young Farmers' Clubs (which in themselves represented a great stride forward), and to the new agriculturalists represented by the amateur gardeners and allotment holders. To housewives went services on cooking, diet, clothes, conservation. To mothers went special services on prenatal and post-natal care, child health and welfare. These included special campaigns on such things as diphtheria immunisation and blood transfusion. Again, civil defence workers not only were enabled to change their techniques almost overnight by the co-ordinated use of all information media (and not least the film); they also were encouraged to discuss international issues through film shows, lectures and study groups.

One of the most sensational developments of the war years was the new system of Army education. The War Office—long known as the most crusted repository of backward thinking—reacted with such violence to the impact of total war that it became a pioneer in the educational field. With a largely conscripted Army it became clear that a citizen soldier would be a better fighting man if he knew and understood clearly the issues about which he was fighting. A system of Army education was therefore evolved, which was divided into two parts. Firstly, every opportunity was provided for soldiers either to continue their interrupted education or apprenticeship; and, in the case of Young Soldiers' Battalions, classroom work was a compulsory drill. A large panel of teachers and lecturers was assembled, and this included a number of men and women from all the Universities. Special arrangements were made for the use by soldiers of local technical colleges and evening institutes. Even to remote ack-ack batteries on lonely stretches of coast came lecturers and discussion leaders to supplement the tired, bedraggled troupes of ENSA.

Role of ABCA

Secondly, ABCA—the Army Bureau of Current Affairs—was set up and put in the charge of the peacetime organiser of the Workers' Educational Association. ABCA was on all counts one of the most astonishing achievements of the war. Its basis was that at least once a week, and as a compulsory drill, each officer in the British Army should hold a free and open discussion with his men on current problems and developments at home and overseas. For these discussions ABCA provided regular wall newspapers, in colour and with world maps; discussion pamphlets for the assistance of officers; and discussion pamphlets for distribution to the men. Courses in ABCA were provided so that officers could learn the techniques of discussion leadership, and Commanding Officers were bound to send their staffs to these courses. Two or more main subjects for discussion were selected and issued by ABCA every fortnight. Their approach was impressive, ranging from the world strategy of oil to studies of local democratic problems such as housing, employment and indeed education itself. Not only were films extensively used by ABCA wherever possible, but also travelling play units, based partly on the Living Newspaper style developed in the USA and partly on British documentary technique, were developed and gave performances in camps, barracks and training centres. It was in the strongest centres of ABCA that morale was always found to be highest.

Tied in with Army education, and with the brilliant work of the Department of Army Psychiatry, new selection techniques were evolved to ensure that each man should be allocated to an army job for which his temperament, capabilities and previous experience best fitted him. This system eventually developed a method of officer selection which is second to none in the world. In this respect it is interesting to note, as an aspect of British information that the MOI issued two films, each lasting over 60 minutes, explaining the system in detail and with great clarity; and that *The Way Ahead*, one of the most successful feature films of the war, was an expanded re-make of an Army "morale" film, with a script written in collaboration with a group of Army psychiatrists.

Films for the Colonies

A further example of the reflection of the new mood of questioning among the people was the revival of the work begun by EMB. The Colonial Office, through the MOI, instituted a campaign, in which films were mainly used, to provide both foreground and background information about the Colonial Empire. The bulk of this campaign dealt with East and West Africa, and a considerable number of films were made, both from existing material and by expeditions sent specially to Africa for the purpose.

The Future

Today, in the confused and perplexing post-war world, the documentary idea and method, spearheaded still by film, has a great part to play.

It is too early yet to assess the value and potentialities of the new Central Office of Information. Its constitution gives it the opportunity to be an active and not a passive agency for public enlightenment and information, and it will be on the vigour and hard-thinking of its personnel that its success will depend.

Meantime, from the point of view of documentary, the needs are clear. They are:—

(1) The continuous development of all types of informational film, from the most highly specialised to the most box-office.
(2) Renewed efforts on the allied fronts of distribution and exhibition. The urgency now is for maximum screen-space and screen-time everywhere.
(3) Increased energies devoted to relations with the other mass-media, radio, television and the Press.
(4) The widening of horizons on the international front. The constrictions imposed by Britain's wartime isolation are over. Both thought and action are needed to spread documentary effort across the frontiers of the world.

Eighteen years of hard work and the meaning of the word documentary is still changing. Perhaps it needs no definition. A pithy phrase today may be meaningless tomorrow. Information, education, public relations, public policy, international relations have been taken, not without pain and strife, in its stride. It is recognised as Britain's major contribution to world cinema. Its influence on feature films has been more fundamental than is realised. That is the past and the present. The future will bring its own problems to change again the meaning of the word. The one aspect of documentary that will not change is its ability to be the spearhead in bringing a fresh and vital approach to public enlightenment.

GRIERSON ON DOCUMENTARY

Forsyth Hardy's compilation reviewed by Alex Shaw

READING Grierson's book is just like watching an evening's boxing. There's the ring flooded with a hard white light and there's the author putting up a terrific show, fighting in all the matches and, what's more, taking on all comers. No arranged matches for him. Sometimes he does try and fool us by pretending that he is acting as referee or critic, but he cannot keep it up for long. Bing bang and he's out there again punishing the aesthetes, the loose thinkers, the wishy-washy and the dull. But mostly the dull.

And just in case the reader should begin to glow with the self-righteousness that comes from feeling he is on the side of the angels, he packs a few unexpected punches designed to shatter anybody's self-composure.

The book consists of selections, admirably made by Forsyth Hardy, from Grierson's writings over the last sixteen years or so. It covers all kinds of subjects: Harpo Marx, Asquith, the Russian directors, the film in the school, propaganda and the film, the history of the documentary movement, the future of the film, the use of sound and a dozen and one such matters. Just for good measure he blows a smacking great kiss to the glorious Miss Mae West.

A lot of writers have tackled these subjects before and produced their own particular brand of cold suet pudding. Grierson has produced a magnificent, digestible and completely satisfying plum pudding complete with flaming spirits, a sprig of very prickly holly and lashings of brandy butter. And if I appear to have wandered from the boxing ring to the kitchen I can only say that it is that kind of book.

I tried marking the passages I thought ought to be quoted either as an example of how good it is or of how enraging Grierson can be. I eventually found that the whole book was scribbled over with scorings and asterisks and question marks. Anyway, it's not the sort of book to imagine you have read just because you think you have got the gist from some quotes in a review.

A lot of its vitality is due to the fact the stuff in it was written at different times but always with a purpose. There is no air of making up words for the sake of filling a space. And if time has left some of the secondary subjects rather stranded on the beach the only wonder is that so much of it is as vital today as it ever was.

In one respect time has betrayed the author. One of the earlier passages refers to his belief that sound would burst the bonds of voice and enrich the film with its possibilities. Having just seen a collection of the latest films from all over the world I can only say that the sound track has shrunk not expanded. Speech and music rule the tracks and tie the film down as it has never been tied since sound came in. Mexican, Russian, Portuguese and all talk and talk and talk.

It's possible that he was wrong in the first place. Or maybe we have all got a bit lazy.

Perhaps you are not interested in technicalities? Then try the pieces on the film in education, on the relationship between Government sponsored films and politics. Or if this is not your line read section one on the Directors of the Thirties and the Cinema of Ideas and then wonder what the author uses for a magic crystal.

But enough of this so-called review. Each section could start a dozen arguments or provide material for several articles. Read the book but be prepared to mix your appreciative nods with several frowns. Because someone is thinking and not softening the resulting blows.

It only remains to add that Forsyth Hardy has done an excellent introduction, written some useful notes and collected a fine selection of stills to which the publishers have done full justice.

(*Grierson on Documentary*. Edited by H. Forsyth Hardy. (Collins.) 15*s*.)

MUNICIPAL CINEMA IN NORWAY

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

THE FIRST public cinema in Norway was opened in Oslo in November, 1904. Perhaps it was the relative lateness in taking up the new art that allowed the Norwegian government to take a long view. Whatever the reason, a law passed in January, 1914, not only gave the Norwegian municipalities power to control all film shows in their areas, but enabled them to build and open cinemas of their own and to forbid their introduction by private enterprise. The first town to take advantage of the new law was Notodden.

In 1918 the municipality of Oslo decided to forbid the opening of any new privately owned cinemas after January 1st, 1919. From January 1st, 1926, all privately owned cinemas were forbidden. Since that time, almost the whole film trade in Norway—cinemas, renting, studios and laboratories has been in the hands of the municipalities. The privately owned cinemas mainly belong to the co-operative movement and are very small. Though the exact number of cinemas after the German depredations in the North is at present uncertain, it is estimated that, in the spring of 1946, 104 municipally owned cinemas had a gross annual revenue of 35,000,000 kroner, while 146 privately owned cinemas grossed only 5,000,000 kroner. Of the total revenues, Oslo cinemas contributed about 33¼ per cent, Bergen 7½ per cent, Trondheim 4½ per cent and Stavanger 3½ per cent. The Norwegian State levies a general tax of 40 per cent on the gross income, but Norwegian films—which are few and far between—are encouraged by a tax of only 25 per cent. Before the war, home-produced films were responsible for about 11 per cent of the gross yearly income. Film rentals are fixed at 30 per cent of the gross, and the American renters who attempted to force Norway to pay a higher percentage by withholding new films appear to have been defeated.

The municipal cinemas of Norway are all members of the "Kommunale Kinematografers Landsforbund". On behalf of its members, the KKL negotiates with film producers and the representatives of overseas film companies. It also publishes the only film trade paper in Norway, *Norsk Filmblad*, together with a yearbook. In 1919 the KKL set up its own renting organisation, the "Kommunenes Filmsentral A/S". In 1927 the Oslo section of the KKL bought the majority of the shares in the oldest renting company in Norway—"A/S Fotorama", and this is now merged with Kommunenes Filmsentral, which controls about one-third of all the renting in the country. The remaining two-thirds are divided between some fifteen private home and foreign distributors.

Kommunenes Filmsentral is not only a renting company. It is responsible for almost all the educational film activity in the country, with a catalogue containing 75 titles; it owns the biggest and best laboratory in Norway; it controls "Norsk Film A/S", the only studios in Norway; and it finances and runs the Norwegian newsreel. The one aspect of the film industry which has hitherto been neglected is the documentary, informational, and instructional film.

SOCIETY, SCIENCE AND MOVIE

(*continued from page* 55)

however, to overcome this difficulty by collaboration with film producers who understand the issues involved. Preliminary discussion and investigation indicates that collaborative research on such topics as the psychological mechanism by which the film operates on the audience, the interests and attitudes of the audience in relation to specific films, the satisfactions provided by the film, might lead to the uncovering of facts which would be applicable to documentary and instructional film making. More specific topics for instruction might be the effect of musical background in films and the effects produced by real characters versus actors.

The Sociatry of the Film

In addition to research along the above lines, the general problem of the influence which the documentary and feature film exert in public life today has yet to be studied. Long-term research is needed to discover the extent to which films cement old values or create new ones, and thus assist or hinder the social maturing of the community. That this matter is of real importance is well illustrated by the picture built up in British minds of life in America, as a result of observing that country through the eyes of Hollywood.

That the film is a permanent part of modern culture and that it exercises a considerable influence on the world's view of itself, no one can doubt. If it is to be a constructive force, its mode of operation must be clearly understood. The collaborative examination of such problems by the film maker and the specialist in human relations may lead to an increasing understanding of the dynamics of the film as an art form and as a teaching medium.

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